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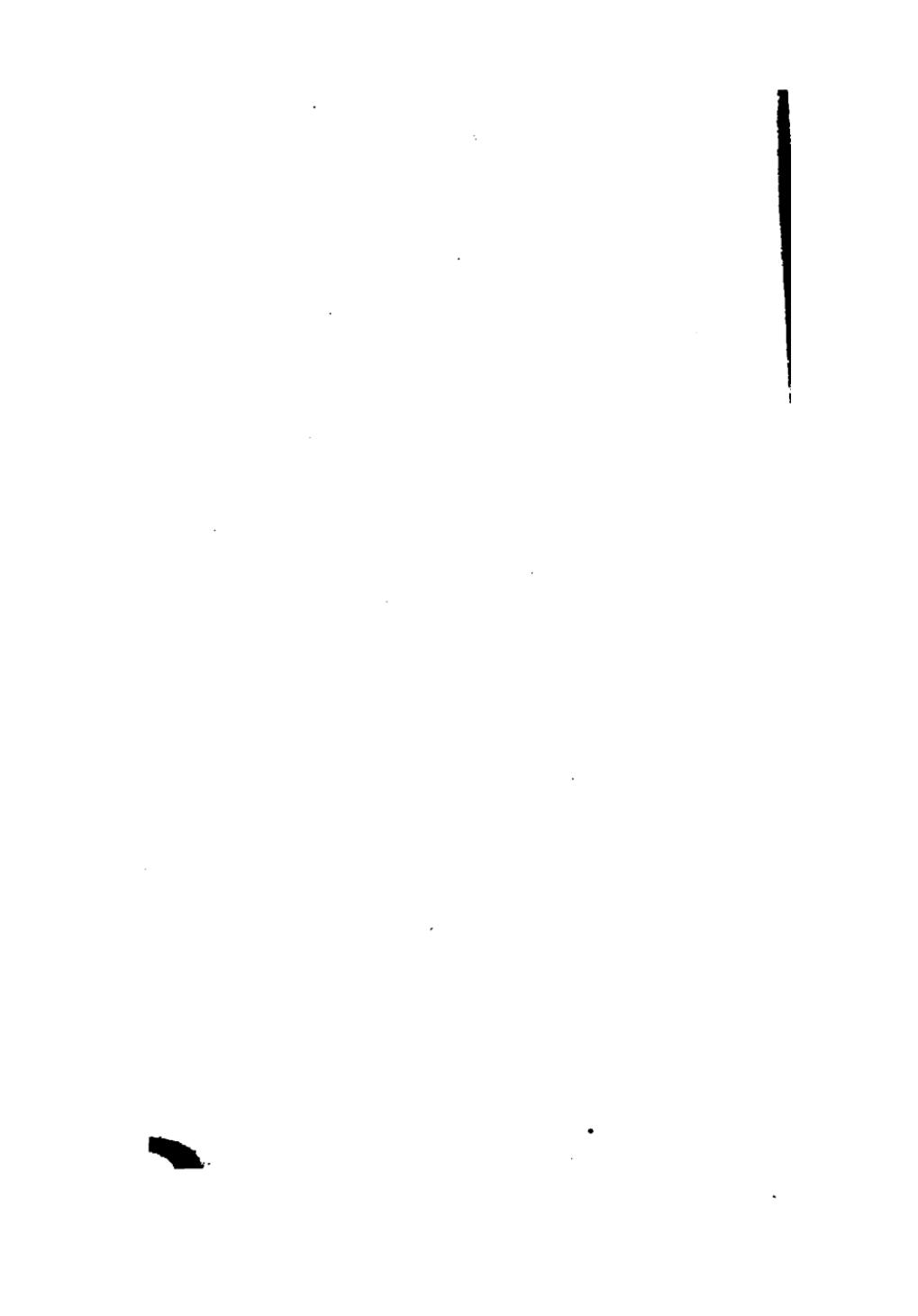
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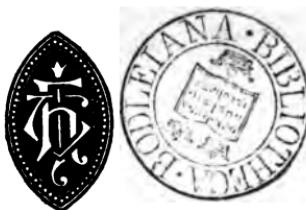
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THE
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BY

THE AUTHOR OF "TALES OF KIRKBECK,"
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VOL. I.



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THE CHURCH MILITANT.

“ One only Way to life : .
One Faith, delivered once for all ;
One Holy Band, endow'd with Heaven's high call ;
 One earnest, endless strife : —
This is the Church th' Eternal fram'd of old.”

Lyra Apostolica.

THE CHURCH MILITANT.

CHAPTER I.

"Nothing is left or lost, nothing of good
Or lovely, but, whatever its first spring
Has drawn from God, returns to Him again:
That only which 'twere misery to retain
Is taken from you, which to keep were loss.

. Therefore be strong, be strong
Ye that remain, nor fruitlessly revolve
Darkling, the riddles which ye cannot solve;
But do the works that unto you belong."

Rev. R. C. Trench.

THE SWORD RESTING ON CHRIST—ON HIS APOSTLES—ON
ALL HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE—CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OUR INHE-
RITANCE FROM THE APOSTLES AND PRIMITIVE FATHERS—
NOVELTY OFTEN FALSELY SO ESTEEMED.

HE, Who spoke as never man spake, said:
“Think not that I am come to send peace on
earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.”

The Prince of Peace brought the sword into
His earthly kingdom, and left it amongst His
servants. As a flaming Sword guarded the gates
of that paradise whence the first Adam was

banished, even so are the blessed gates of the heavenly Paradise which the Second Adam won for us, guarded by the sword likewise : they must be approached and entered into through many and grievous pangs and conflicts, for to all those who entering within them, will "go out no more," it is ordained, that they shall come out of great tribulation, therein washing their robes, and making them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

The King, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty, was also forecalled by the prophets "the Man of Sorrows;" and before the deep awful words "I came not to send peace, but a sword," proceeded from the lips of Him,—our Blessed Lord,—He was subject to the sword of the law. When, on the eighth day after His birth, His holy Virgin Mother brought Him to the temple, to undergo the rite of circumcision, it was said to her (yet as part of a blessing), that "the sword shall pass through thine own soul also;"¹ and who would deny that the prophetic words were fulfilled to her, even though from that day henceforth she is of all generations called blessed? By the bitter sword of the murderer they fell, who, dying that the infant Saviour might live to die for them a bitterer death,² now follow the Lamb

¹ S. Luke ii, 35.

² "Who died for Thee,
That Thou might'st live for them a sadder death to see."

—*Christian Year.*

wheresoever He goeth, the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb.¹ He who was specially sent, the appointed messenger to prepare th' way of the Lord, after a short life of hardness fell beneath the sword of Herod.²

The chosen Twelve, when first sent by their Master to preach the Kingdom of Heaven, learned from His lips that the sword awaited them likewise. How many times did He tell them what sufferings awaited them, repeating and dwelling upon them, as though to familiarise the minds of those on whom He would build His Church, that the sword, visible or invisible, was her chosen heritage, and must ever be her portion on earth. "They will deliver you up," He said, "to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My Sake. . . . And ye shall be hated of all men for My Sake. . . . Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul."³ They were to "hear of wars and rumours of wars;"⁴ division and separation were to come upon them; "the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son:"⁵ and He spoke to them of "men's hearts failing them for fear."⁶ of their "troubled hearts,"⁷ and of "sorrow filling their hearts."⁸ Persecutions, trembling, and

¹ Rev. xiv. 4. ² S. Matt. xiv. 10. ³ S. Matt. x.

⁴ S. Matt. xxiv. ⁵ S. Mark xiii. ⁶ S. Luke xxi. 26.

⁷ S. John xiv. 1. ⁸ S. John xvi. 6.

deep fear, separation from all that earth held dearest, was the lot of those that would follow Him Who said: “I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!”² It was ever to sufferers, to those afflicted with leprosy, with blindness, or palsy, or burning fever,—the poor, the lost, the broken-hearted, the captive, the penitent and prostrate sinner despised of his proud fellow-men; to those bowed down under infirmity, in the eyes of the world overwhelming,—that our Blessed Lord seemed to draw nearest; as though they were most meet to receive His Baptism of Blood. Even more: to those upon whom the sword had not yet lighted, He, in the depths of His pitying Mercy, taught that they should seek for it; that they should, as it were, wield it for themselves: “If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee;”³ and “Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My Sake shall find it.”⁴ And again; that leaving house, brethren, sisters, father, mother, wife, children, and lands, they should receive *here* persecutions, *hereafter* eternal life.⁵

To tell of His Sufferings, and how the sword

¹ S. Luke xii. 49, 50.

² S. Matt. xviii. 8.

³ S. Matt. xvi. 25.

⁴ S. Mark x. 29, 30.

He brought upon earth rested with its keenest edge upon Himself, both in Body and Spirit, seems almost presumption in us; for who can attempt to fathom the intensity of His anguish—God made Man. Surely the memory of that anguish should be engraven on the heart and life of all those who, by holy baptism, have been buried with Him in His Death; and who, when signed with the blessed emblem of salvation, bind themselves to Him as His soldiers, and offer their hearts too, ready to be pierced with the sword which He has brought. It is the yearly, weekly, and daily¹ object of the Church's teaching, to bring those Sufferings before us, till, dwelling upon them, and praying through them, they become wholly our own, the means of our redemption.

So, from the time when His disciples walked in sadness, and gathered together “in fear of the Jews,” the history of His Church is a record of persecutions, of sufferings, of trials, of martyrdoms. From His followers the sword departed not; some were “tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection;” and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were

¹ Yearly, in Lent; weekly, in the observance of Friday, the day of His Crucifixion; and daily, in the Hours—the third, sixth, and ninth—at which He was sentenced in the judgment-hall, crucified, and expired.

sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword ; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy) ; they wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth.”¹

Nor were bodily sufferings all ; must not these holy men, who, taught by Christ Himself, knew how alone their fellow-men could be saved, have often borne a spiritual martyrdom far exceeding that of the body, when they saw multitudes altogether rejecting the proffered salvation, and despising Him Who gave it ? whilst even among those who, after S. Barnabas came to Antioch, began to bear the name of Christians,² heresies, false teachers, and schisms were ere long found rising to rend asunder that body which they prayed to see one in God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Something of this we see throughout the Apostolic writings ; as when S. John says that the spirit of Antichrist “is already in the world ;”³ and S. Peter, that “false teachers shall privily bring in damnable heresies” amongst the people, “and many shall follow their pernicious ways.”⁴ Still more distinctly S. Paul, when enumerating his trials, speaks of “that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches ;”⁵ and, “I think that God hath set

¹ Hebrews xi. 35-39. ² Acts xi. 26. ³ 1 S. John iv. 3.
⁴ 1 S. Peter ii. 1, 2. ⁵ 2 Cor. xi. 28.

forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed unto death."¹

Most bitter of all perhaps, would be the falling away of those whom they loved, and trusted would stand fast in the Lord, such grief as S. Paul endured when he wrote, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."²

But all these sorrows and tribulations the chosen servants of God were strengthened to bear without shrinking or yielding under them, for the glorious promise that was made to them, and not to them only, but to all besides, who humbly treading, though afar off, in their footsteps, have the same faith and the same hope, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."³

Therefore, though in tracing the history of the primitive Church and its first Fathers, the immediate successors of the holy Apostles, we must dwell upon many a scene of persecution, and anguish, and bloody martyrdom, let us not draw back, as though the Kingdom of Heaven did not suffer violence, and the violent take it by storm,—let us rather reverentially gaze upon those sufferings which, in their proportion, likened the disciples to their Master,—let us not presume to pity them, but remembering Who said, and ever sayeth, "Blessed are they which are persecuted

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 9.

² 2 Tim. iv. 10.

³ Rev. iii. 21.

for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My Sake; rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven ;"—let us, in compliance with the teaching of the Catholic Church, to which they and we belong, bless His Holy Name for all His servants departed this life in His faith and fear, beseeching Him to give us grace so to follow their good example, that, with them, we may be partakers of His Heavenly Kingdom.

Nor let us rest in supine heedlessness, if so be that the sword seems not yet to have come upon us, as though it should never come. It may be that it is nearer than we suppose. And if, in pity to the weakness of His children, God at present withholds those more fearful trials which He permitted to search and prove His first-born servants, let us rather acknowledge that it is because we are babes in Christ, and unable to bear the sterner discipline which they bore; and by continual prayer, by self-discipline, by enduring hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ¹ let us make it the business of our lives, from the font to the grave, to gain strength against the day when the sword shall come to us. Come it will, we must hope it may; for "whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth," and

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 3.

we "have need of patience that after we have done the will of God, we might receive the promise."¹

There is many a riven heart of which the world knows nothing;² many a deep life-long cross borne in patient silence, many a martyrdom without blood or fire; the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and there is but One besides by whom every least and most secret pang is beheld, watched over, and sympathised with. If it is given to us thus to bear a hidden cross, let us go on in meekness, doubting not, but taking the saints of old "for an example of suffering, affliction, and of patience,"³ rejoicing and giving thanks that we are permitted to bear the trial of our faith, which, though tried by fire, shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.⁴

And who indeed, knows but what the dark days—days of persecution and sorrow, are even now near at hand; and these too, the very fruits of heresies and shortcomings of the faith, similar to the days of our fathers. Surely God does not speak in vain when He points out, with a finger not to be mistaken, dark clouds overhanging the Church of our baptism—dark clouds, in which we see the rulers of the Church afraid to pro-

¹ Heb. x. 36.

² "What private griefs he hath
Alas! I know not."—Shakspeare.

³ S. James v. 10. ⁴ 1 S. Peter i. 7.

claim her truths, and bowing down in their vain imaginations before the expediency of a worldly and time-serving age. May we not justly be called upon at this time to reflect, whether we have hearts to follow these glorious leaders of ancient days ; and if we have hearts, whether we have courage ; and if we have courage, whether we have faith ? May we not justly ask ourselves the question, whether we are ready to “ resist unto blood, striving against sin ?”¹ whether we shall be able to “ earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints ?”² At any rate, let us pray that it may be so. God, in His infinite Mercy, give us the ardent fearless hearts of love, strong unto death, that animated His first saints and martyrs. They joyfully shed their blood for their Church, the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, and let us remember that their Church is ours too ; we have the same Head, the same Creed, the same pure, holy, unalterable Faith,—let us abide by her even as they did, and if need be, like them die for her.

Nor let us lightly esteem the privilege we enjoy in finding our path, be it narrow or perplexed, or even bitter and bloody, trodden before us, and marked with the footsteps of holy men who, having “ retained the mystery of the faith ” themselves, now being dead yet speak, to counsel, to

¹ Hebrews xii. 4.

² S. Jude iii.

comfort, and to admonish us, that we following their example, should hold fast that which is good, and not be led astray by fables which only "minister questions."¹

In all times, and all places, the Catholic Church has held that the right interpretation of Scripture is most securely to be found at the hands of those who, receiving it by successive steps from the inspired authors themselves, and their immediate successors, spoke with more authority than aught else could be supposed to do. It is in this spirit that a canon of our Church says, "That the clergy shall be careful never to teach anything from the pulpit, to be religiously held and believed by the people, but what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old or New Testament, and collected out of that very same doctrine by the *Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops*."²

Therefore it behoves us to seek out, as far as we may, not only the history of the lives of these Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops, but also

¹ "Our Church ties her doctors as much as the Council of Trent does, to expound Scripture according to the consent of the ancient Fathers."—*Bishop Taylor*, x. 322.

"Any particular Church may easily err; but heavily neither soul nor Church can err, which walks heedfully in the steps of the universal and ancient Church."—*Bishop Hall*, 1623.

"Suffer us to enjoy the same creeds the primitive Fathers did."—*Archbishop Bramhall*.

² Canon, 1571.

what they taught and practised as the spirit of the Church, both doctrinal and practical, so that we may turn back upon ourselves and inquire how far we are fallen back from the faith once delivered to the saints ; and if (as we may boldly and unhesitatingly affirm to be the case) our Church does in theory correspond with that Primitive Church which they governed and directed, then let each of us pursue the inquiry, and ask of ourselves, Do we individually seek to live up to the theory and rule of faith laid by the Church upon us, and held by her, as transmitted from the time of our Great Head and His apostles ?

And before we undutifully cavil at our own Mother, and complain that she gives not that now to her children which the Primitive Church gave, let us pause and ascertain whether she is less loving, less bountiful, less wise, than of old ; or whether, in our indolence, our self-sufficiency, and our wilfulness, we have not lost, or suffered to fall into desuetude, the matters of doctrine or discipline, the loss of which we now lament ?

And on the other hand, let such of us as are inclined to hinder her when she strives to arouse her dormant energies, and accuse her of taking too much upon her, and of teaching novelties when she would but restore that which, for our sins' punishment has been laid aside ; beware lest we prove ourselves no true children, but

profaners of God's holy commandment, which directs us to hear the Church. Let us beware lest we find ourselves, whilst we imagine we are only opposing corruption and error, to be opposing Catholic truth.

In the words of a living Churchman, "It is self-evident that, if in any age or country any portion of Apostolical truth be lost, whenever it is revived, it must, for the time, look new; . . . not novelty therefore, relative to us, but novelty relative to the primitive and original standard, is the thing above all, to be deprecated in the whole of theology. . . . S. Paul tells the Thessalonians that the apostasy will come: the wicked one shall be revealed, actuated by Satan, to deceive them that perish, 'on whom God will send strong delusion, that they may believe a lie.' And then he proceeds: 'Wherefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.' Is not this equivalent to saying, that whoever is studious of novelty in religion, is in a way to take part with Antichrist: that the only security against him is to hold the Apostolical doctrine, whether taught in word or in writing, and to exclude all additions. . . . The phraseology of the Apostle is formed throughout upon the supposition, that in the substance of the faith there is no such thing as improvement, discovery, evolution of new truths; none of those processes, which are the pride of human reason and know-

ledge, find any place here. Here the one thing needful is to ‘*retain* the mystery of the faith ;’ to ‘*abide* in the good instruction whereto we have already attained ;’ to ‘teach no other doctrine ;’ to be on our guard against those who resist the truth, under pretence of ‘proceeding further ;’ assured that such, although they seem to be ‘ever learning,’ shall never be able to ‘come to the knowledge of the truth ;’ they will *proceed*, indeed, but it will be from bad to worse. All these cautions, and others no less fearful, the Holy Spirit has left for our admonition, directed not against any positive wrong opinion, but in general against the fatal error of treating theology like any human science, as a subject in which every succeeding age might be expected to advance on the former.”¹

So, with humble and teachable hearts, let us seek to become acquainted and imbued with the spirit of those Catholic Fathers, and ancient Bishops and martyrs, of whom the canon speaks ; and, meanwhile, let us pray in the words of one who lived a faithful son of the Church, and died a martyr in her cause :²

“ O merciful God ! since Thou hast ordered me, to live in times in which the rents of Thy Church are grievous, I humbly beseech Thee to guide me, that the divisions of men may not

¹ A sermon on “ Primitive Tradition,” by the Rev. J. Keble, p. 46.

² Archbishop Laud.

separate me either from Thee or it; that I may ever labour the preservation of truth and peace; that where for and by our sins the peace of it succeeds not, Thou wilt yet accept my will for the deed, that I may still pray, even while Thou grantest not, because I know Thou wilt grant it when Thou seest it fit. In the meantime, bless, I beseech Thee, this Church in which I live, that in it I may honour and serve Thee all the days of my life, and after this be glorified by Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"The Ark of God is in the field,
Like clouds around the alien armies sweep ;
Each by his spear, beneath his shield,
In cold and dew the anointed warriors sleep.

And can it be thou liest awake,
Sworn watchman, tossing on thy couch of down ?
And doth thy recreant heart not ache
To hear the sentries round the leaguered town ?

Oh dream no more of quiet life ;
Care finds the careless out : more wise to vow
Thine heart entire to Faith's pure strife:
So peace will come, thou knowest not when or how ? "

Lyra Apostolica.

CHAPTER II.

" Who can impair Thee, Mighty King, or bound
Thy empire? Easily the proud attempt
Of spirits apostate, and their counsels vain,
Thou hast repell'd; while impiously they thought
Thee to diminish, and from Thee withdraw
The number of Thy worshippers. Who seeks
To lessen Thee against his purpose serves
To manifest the more Thy might: his evil
Thou usest, and from thence createst more good."

Paradise Lost, Book vii.

SIMON MAGUS—HIS HERESY—MENANDER—NICOLAITAN HERESY—CERINTHIAN HERESY—GNOSTIC HERESY—THE NAZARENES—EBIONITES—CARPOCRATIANS—PERSECUTION UNDER NERO—MARTYRDOX OF SS. PETER AND PAUL—OTHER CONTEMPORARY MARTYRS—MARTYRDOM OF S. JAMES, BISHOP OF JERUSALEM—SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

WE may regard the heresy of Simon the Magician as the first and foremost of all the rank weeds that began to spring up from the very foot of the Cross, and have not ceased ever since, to bewilder and perplex the unstable, and to cause alarm and carefulness in the Church of Christ. In the eighth chapter of the Acts, S. Luke gives us some account of this Simon. Philip had been performing miracles of healing, and amongst the people who are described as

"with one accord giving heed" unto the words and actions of Philip, was Simon, a noted magician ; "which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that he himself was some great one ; to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God." Even as the devils "believe and tremble," this bad man believed and received the rite of baptism at Philip's hands. But the seed had fallen on a stony place, and Simon's belief was not unto salvation. He had believed, because of the miracles wrought by Philip, in the Name of Jesus ; but, probably, he only recognised in Him Who bore that Name, a worker of magic, possessed of deeper lore than himself—one who was allied with more potent spirits than those he invoked to aid his sorceries. Apparently, it was under this total spiritual blindness, that he offered money to SS. Peter and John for the gift of the Holy Ghost ; seeking only an increase of that which might further his professional gains, and wholly ignorant of the real nature of that which he profanely sought to acquire by purchase. S. Peter indignantly answered : "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter ; for thy heart is not right in the Sight of God. Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and

pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." Simon's entreaty, "Pray ye the Lord for me," would have led us to suppose that he was awakened, and would follow St. Peter's admonition to repent; but like Pharaoh, his heart was once more hardened. We do not hear of him again in Holy Scripture; but from the writings of SS. Irenæus and Tertullian, we learn that, rejecting¹ the opening made for him, he turned to wallow yet deeper in his mire, and travelling about from place to place, everywhere taught his bold and blasphemous heresy, that he himself was "the great power or virtue of God, the Paraclete: in short, that in him were combined all the attributes of God."²

At Tyre, he took for his companion a beautiful woman named Helena, whom he stated to be, like himself, an emanation from God; but that having come under the power of evil angels, she

¹ S. Jerome quotes Simon's own words: "I am the Word of God; I am the beauty of God; I am the Paraclete, the Allpowerful; I am all that is in God."

² It is a brand-mark on heresy, that the first heretic either came to baptism altogether feignedly, or at least shortly afterwards was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; either never having been loosed from it, or having forthwith bound it again yet closer round himself. . . . His history, alas! is nothing so insulated in that of mankind. It is the type of that common though fearful occurrence, when men, struck by some awful event around

was doomed to a state of transmigration, in the course of which, he said, she had tenanted the body of Helen of Troy. This woman, Simon called the mother of all things, and likewise the impersonation of wisdom. The results of this blasphemous heresy were such as might be anticipated. Simon's life, and that of his followers, were profligate and evil to the utmost degree. Tradition relates of his end, that having repaired to Rome, and there withstood the Truth as defended by SS. Peter and Paul, Simon undertook, by the aid of his ministering spirits, to ascend up into the air ; but his presumptuous daring was checked by Him against Whom he strove, and the impostor fell to the ground in the presence of Nero, and of the Apostles, and shortly after perished. This was about the year 65.¹

It has been supposed, that the Gospel of S. John was written with the view of counteracting

them, or in their own lives, or by some imposing act of God's Providence, for a while abandon their evil courses ; and then, when their besetting temptation recurs, fall back into it, and, for the most part, sink deeper and more miserably. Simon the sorcerer but entered the Christian pale, to become Simon the arch-heretic—the first seducer of the brethren, the first-born of Satan. And though at the time he humbled himself openly before the Apostles : 'Pray ye unto the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken of come upon me :' yet we know that this, too, lasted but for a while, and that the wretched man died opposing the Apostle whose prayers he now sought."—*Dr. Pusey, Tract on Baptism.*

¹ *Tillemont. Hist. Ecclésiastique.*

the pernicious mysticism of Simon's heresy, which was daily branching out into new and not less corrupt heresies ; and the manner in which he dwells upon the application of the title *Logos*, or Word (being that which Simon assumed), seems to bear out this supposition. Many parts of the Apostolic writings were considered by the fathers to have special reference to this heresy : S. Cyril points out, as having this meaning, 1 John ii. 18, 19 : "They went out from us, but they were not of us." And again, 1 Tim. vi. 20 : "Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoid profane and idle babbling, and oppositions of science falsely so called."

Simon was succeeded by his pupil, Menander, whose doctrine differed from that of his master only in that he professed not to be the Supreme Virtue himself, but only the envoy thereof : he baptized in his own name, and gave out that those who received that baptism should enjoy perpetual youth.

The Nicolaitan heresy, which we find condemned in such unsparing language by God Himself (Rev. ii. 6, "The deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I hate ;" and Rev. ii. 15, "The doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate,") is supposed to have sprang from Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch,¹ whom we find mentioned

¹ SS. Epiphanius, Irenæus, Hilary, Gregory of Nissa, and others, all hold this Nicolas to have been the founder of the heretical sect.

in Acts vi. 5, as one appointed, together with S. Stephen and other holy men, to share in the care of the Church. At the same time, there is every reason to believe, that Nicolas was guilty rather of opening the door to the heresy, than of teaching the false doctrine which his followers held. There is not, however, much definite knowledge to be obtained concerning this sect.

The Cerinthian heresy had its origin in one Cerinthus, supposed by S. Epiphanius to have been the leader of those spoken of in Acts xv. 1 : " Certain men, which came down from Judea, taught the brethren and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Certain it is that the fundamental error of this sect lay in adhering so tenaciously to the letter of the Jewish law, as to weaken, and finally to deny, the Divinity of the Saviour. Cerinthus was excommunicated by the Apostles, and according to S. Irenæus, S. John especially was engaged in combating his errors. Cerinthus taught that there was but One God, and that He had a Son ; but not the Word Which was from the beginning. Between Jesus and Christ he recognised a difference ; the former was man only, born of Joseph and Mary, differing from other men only as pre-eminent in holiness and wisdom. At His Baptism, Christ descended upon this Jesus, and before His Suffering upon the cross reascended up to heaven, thereby annihilating the doctrine of the Atone-

ment. Cerinthus likewise held some strange doctrine concerning the Resurrection, and S. Epiphanius considers that it is to the Cerinthian custom of baptizing by proxy for the dead, to which S. Paul alludes in 1 Cor. xv. 29, when he says : " Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all ? Why are they then baptized for the dead ? "

The title of Gnosticism has been applied to all the various sects which sprang more or less from oriental mysticism, and of which the essence was to affect the possession of new lights and superior understanding. The word gnostic signifies in the Greek one who is enlightened or knowing. SS. Epiphanius and Irenæus class all those sects of which we have been speaking, and some others of less note, under the title of Gnostics, and ascribe the origin of the whole to Simon. Still, Gnosticism has too much of an individual character to be altogether passed over thus. Its main feature was the existence of two principles, Good and Evil ; the former, all spiritual and immaterial ; the latter, material. The first was the Supreme Being, self-existing, unapproachable, incomprehensible. From Him had proceeded all outward and visible existence ; but its incorporation, or communication with what was material, had polluted and destroyed the higher or spiritual nature of which it partook. And as, according to their tenets, all material intercourse was pol-

lution, they could not admit that God had descended upon earth, and taken upon Him the form of man, to save man.¹ They therefore explained the whole of the mysterious Conception, Incarnation, Agony, and final Crucifixion of our Blessed Lord, into an unreal illusion, produced upon

¹ It is in allusion to this heresy that S. Ignatius wrote: "Stop your ears, as often as any one shall speak contrary to Jesus Christ . . . Who was truly born . . . was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and dead . . . was also truly raised from the dead by His Father, after the same manner as He will also raise up us who believe in Him, by Christ Jesus; without Whom we have no true life. But if, as some who are atheists,—that is to say, infidels,—pretend, that He only seemed to suffer (they themselves only seeming to exist), why then am I bound? Why do I desire to fight with beasts? . . . Flee, therefore, these evil sprouts, which bring forth deadly fruit, of which if any one taste, he shall presently die."—*Epist. to the Trallians*, ix.

And again: "I arm you beforehand against certain beasts in the shape of men, whom you must not only not receive, but if it be possible, must not meet with. Only you must pray for them, that, if it be the Will of God, they may repent, which yet will be very hard. But of this our Lord Jesus Christ has the power, Who is our true Life. For if all these things were done only in show by our Lord, then do I also only seem to be bound. And why have I given up myself to death, to the fire, to the sword, to wild beasts? But now, the nearer I am to the sword, the nearer I am to God. When I shall come among the wild beasts, I shall come to God. Only in the Name of Jesus Christ, I undergo all, to suffer together with Him; He, Who was made a Perfect Man, strengthening me."—*Epist. to the Smyrnians*, iv.

men's minds ; holding His Mortal Form to be a phantom only, incapable of real sensation or suffering.¹

In such a state, so rent by schisms and heresies, was Christ's Church, within so few years after He had said ; " And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."²

He had set the Truth before mankind, in so giving Himself to be lifted up before the eyes of the whole world. " If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin ; but now they have no cloke for their sin."³ But men had refused to look upon His Cross and live ; and even as they of the children of Israel who would not look to the brazen serpent in the wilderness,

¹ The Nazarenes were rather a Jewish than a Christian sect ; for though they received holy baptism and professed the Name of Christ, they adhered so rigidly to the letter of the Jewish law, making it so essential, as quite to set aside the sufficiency of His Atonement. They differed little from the Ebionites, who also had not a full belief in the Divinity of our Lord. They mingled Jewish and Christian law after a singular fashion, observing both the Sabbath and the Lord's Day. They set aside large portions of the New Testament, and mutilated what portions they did receive. Their name was derived from their founder, Ebion,—a Hebrew word, signifying a poor miserable man. The Carpocratian heresy acknowledged One only Principle, or God ; it denied the Divinity of Christ, and rejected the doctrine of the resurrection. From the Carpocratians sprang a vile and profligate sect, calling themselves Adamites.

² John xii. 32.

³ John xv. 22.

perished; so upon those who chose rather to wallow in their own conceits than believe in Him Whom the Father had sent, was the sentence passed: “He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My Words, hath One that judgeth him; the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day.”¹

But at no time did He forsake His faithful and beloved bride, the Church. To His own chosen Apostles, He sent the Comforter to teach them all things, and bring all His Words to their remembrance; and when one by one, He was pleased to let them rest from their labours, and to call them to receive the crown of righteousness, the hope of which had cheered and strengthened them under their mortal struggles, He called other faithful servants, to receive from their hands the power they had received from Him, and from their lips the Words He had taught them: and it is of these that we must now speak.

The first general persecution of the Christian Church, wherein the sword was indeed sharp and unsparing, was that under the emperor Nero. Eusebius, speaking of it, quotes Tertullian’s words, to this effect: “You will find that Nero was the first that persecuted the Christian doctrine, particularly then, when, after subduing all the East, he exercised his cruelty against all

¹ John xii. 48.

at Rome. Such is the man of whom we boast as the leader in our punishment. For he that knows who he was, may know also that there could scarcely be anything but what was great and good, condemned by Nero."¹

The burning of Rome, A.D. 64, was the occasion upon which this terrible persecution broke out. Nero, finding it impossible to stifle the popular feeling, which attributed the conflagration to his agency, willingly seized any opportunity of turning the general odium into a different channel, and naturally the lowly, self-denying, and (in all matters of virtue) rigid followers of the Crucified Nazarene, could neither expect nor find sympathy or mercy at the hand of one so utterly lost to all sense of dignity or decency, much more of morality or religion, as Nero was.² With a view, then, of casting the obloquy of the conflagration from off himself, "he inflicted," says Tacitus, "the most exquisite tortures on those men, who, under the vulgar appellation of Christians, were already branded with deserved infamy. They derived their name and origin from Christ, Who in the reign of Tiberius had suffered death by the sentence of

¹ Eus. Book ii. chap. 25.

² "Nero was the first to wreak the fury of the sword of the Cæsars upon this sect (the Christians). But in such a first founder of our condemnation we even glory. For whoever knoweth him, can understand that nothing save some great good was condemned by Nero."—*Tertul. Apol.* I. 5.

the procurator, Pontius Pilate. For a while this dire superstition was checked, but it burst forth again, and not only spread itself over Judea, the first seat of this mischievous sect, but was soon introduced into Rome,—the common asylum, which receives and protects whatever is impure, whatever is atrocious. The confessions of those who were seized, discovered a great multitude of their accomplices, and they were all convicted, not so much for the crime of setting fire to the city, as for their hatred of human kind. They died in torment; and their torments were embittered by insults and derision. Some were nailed on crosses; others sewn up in the skins of wild beasts, and exposed to the fury of dogs; others again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night. The gardens of Nero were destined for the melancholy spectacle, which was accompanied with a horse-race, and honoured with the presence of the emperor, who mingled with the populace, in the dress and attitude of a charioteer. The guilt of the Christians deserved, indeed, the most exemplary punishment; but the public abhorrence was exchanged to commiseration, from the opinion that these unhappy wretches were sacrificed not so much to the public welfare, as to the cruelty of a jealous tyrant.”¹

¹ Tacit. Annal. xv. 44.

An old writer¹ comments thus upon this passage of Tacitus : "These great geniuses, who so carefully sought after historical truth, were but cold and indifferent concerning that Truth which it had been best for them to know. In their writings they condemned the injustice of princes, who punished an uncertain crime ; but they blushed not to commit a similar injustice, in hating, for alleged or imputed crimes, those whose recognized deeds they were constrained to praise."

A living writer has assigned an ingenious reason for the general readiness to throw the guilt of this conflagration upon the Christians : "It is possible, that misinterpreted expressions of the Christians themselves, might have attracted the blind resentment of the people. The minds of the Christians were constantly occupied with the terrific images of the final coming of the Lord to judgment in fire ; the conflagration of the world was to be the expected consummation, which they devoutly supposed to be instantly at hand. When, therefore, they saw the great metropolis of the world, the city of pride, of sensuality, of idolatry, of blood-shed, burning like a fiery furnace before their eyes,—the Babylon of the West wrapped in one vast sheet of destroying flame ; the more fanatical—the *Jewish* part of the community—may have looked on with something of fierce hope, and

¹ Tillemont, Persée de Neron.

eager anticipation ; expressions almost triumphant may have burst from unguarded lips. They may have attributed the ruin to the righteous Vengeance of the Lord ; it may have seemed the opening of that Kingdom which was to commence with the discomfiture, the desolation of heathenism, and to conclude with the establishment of the millennial Kingdom of Christ. Some of these, in the first instance apprehended and examined, may have made acknowledgments, before a passionate and astonished tribunal, which would lead to the conclusion that, in the hour of general destruction, they had some trust, some security, denied to the rest of mankind ; and this exemption from common misery, if it would not mark them out in some dark manner as the authors of the conflagration, at all events would convict them of that hatred of the human race so often advanced against the Jews."¹

Amongst those who gained the crown of martyrdom in this persecution, were the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul. S. Chrysostom, S. Ambrose, Tertullian, and other Fathers, mention that S. Peter died upon the cross ; according to S. Prudentius, he entreated of the executioners that he might suffer with his head downwards, as being unworthy to die in the same posture as the Saviour. "He had preached the cross of Christ,

¹ Milman, Hist. of Christianity, Book ii. chap. 3.

had borne it in his heart, and its marks in his body, by sufferings and mortification, and he had the happiness to end his life upon the cross. His Lord was pleased not only that he should die for His love, but in the same manner Himself had died for us; by expiring on the cross, which was the throne of His Love. Only the Apostle's humility made a difference, in desiring to be crucified with his head downwards. His Master looked towards heaven, which by His death He opened unto men; but he judged that a sinner, formed from dust, and going to return to dust, ought rather in confusion to look on the earth, as unworthy to raise his eyes to heaven."

S. Paul, being a Roman citizen, suffered the less ignominious death of decapitation. A local tradition says, that "these two holy men were executed on the same day;" and, in the words of S. Clement, "went unto their holy place."¹ The body of S. Peter is said to lie beneath the Vatican church, which bears his name; and that of S. Paul is said to rest in the church of San Paolo fuori le mura at Rome. The Church of England commemorates the conversion of S. Paul on the 29th of January, but does not note the day of his martyrdom; this the Church of Rome celebrates on the 29th of June, together with that of S. Peter, to whose memory

¹ S. Clem. Epist. to Cor. v.

the English Church likewise dedicates that day.¹

S. Clement says; “To these holy Apostles were joined a very great number of others, who having through envy undergone in like manner many pains and torments, have left a glorious example to us. For this, not only men, but women have been persecuted; and having suffered very grievous and cruel punishments, have finished the course of their faith with firmness, and though weak in body, yet received a glorious reward.”²

The Church of Rome commemorates the many nameless martyrs who suffered during this persecution, on the 24th of June, calling them disciples of the Apostles, and the first fruits of the innumerable hosts who were, before long, to bear the same testimony to the Faith.

Nor was it in Rome only that, in fulfilment of the Saviour’s words, the sword came upon earth. The favoured but guilty city of Jerusalem, lay long under its sharp edge. Its first Bishop, S. James, the brother of the Lord, there suffered martyrdom by stoning, uttering with his last breath the divine words (and to him what memories must they have quickened, what depth of meaning

¹ The Church of Rome also observes Jan. 29th as the Feast of the Conversion of S. Paul. S. Chrysostom, in his sermon in Ignat., bears witness to the martyrdom of both S. Peter and S. Paul having taken place in Rome.

² S. Clem. Epist. vi.

must they not have had !): “ O Lord God and Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do ! ”¹ Many of the Jews seem to have attributed the terrible calamities which shortly after befel them, in part to this crime; and Josephus says in relating them: “ These things happened to the Jews, to avenge James the Just, who was the brother of Him that is called Christ, and whom the Jews had slain, notwithstanding his pre-eminent justice.”² But a Greater than James had been there, and “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord ; if they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”³ All the awful prophetic words which had been spoken concerning the holy city were now fulfilled, and Jerusalem truly received at the Lord’s Hand, double for all her sins. Sedition, tyranny and famine within, and a Roman army without, visited the Jews with the fulfilment of their self-invoked curse: “ His Blood be upon us and on our children.” The external calamity of war was truly the least, and Josephus says: “ Although the Romans should leave off the siege, and not fall upon the city with the sword in their hands, yet was there an insuperable war that beset them within, and was augmented every hour; they could not wage war with famine.”⁴ “ The famine was too hard

¹ Eus. Eccles. His. Book ii. 28.

² Ibid.

³ S. John xiii. 16; xv. 20.

⁴ Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Bk. v. ch. ix.

for all other passions, and it is destructive to nothing so much as modesty; for what was otherwise deserving of reverence, was in this case despised; insomuch that children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating, out of their very mouths, and what was still more to be pitied, so did the mothers do as to their infants; and when those that were most dear to them were perishing under their hands, they were not ashamed to take from them the very last drops that might preserve their lives."¹

"The famine devoured the people by whole houses and families, the upper rooms were full of women and children that were dying by famine, and the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged; the children, also, and young men, wandered about the market places like shadows, all swelled with the famine, and fell down dead wheresoever their misery seized them. As for burying them, those that were sick themselves were not able to do it, and those that were well were deterred from doing it by the great multitude of those dead bodies, and by the uncertainty there was how soon they should die themselves; for many died as they were burying others, and many went to their coffins before that fatal hour was come. Nor was there any lamentation made under these calamities, nor were heard any mournful com-

¹ Josephus, Bk. v. ch. 10.

plaints ; but the famine confounded all natural passions : for those who were just going to die, looked upon those that had gone to their rest before them with dry eyes and open mouths. A deep silence, also, and a kind of deadly night had seized upon the city ; while yet the robbers were still more terrible than these miseries were themselves.”¹

The beauty of Jerusalem was indeed quenched. Josephus says : “ Truly, the very view itself was a melancholy thing ; for those places which were before adorned with trees and pleasant gardens, were now become a desolate country every way. and its trees were all cut down : nor could any foreigner that had formerly seen Judea and the most beautiful suburbs of the city, and now saw it as a desert, but lament and mourn sadly at so great a change ; for the war had laid all signs of beauty waste ; nor if any one that had known the place before, had come on a sudden to it now, would he have known it again : but though he were at the city itself, yet would he have inquired for it notwithstanding.”² At length the temple, the pride of all Jewish hearts, was burnt, and a short time after Titus’s army took the city, and entered it with joyful acclamations for their victory ; but even the conquerors were sobered and saddened, when they beheld the deplorable condition to which the

¹ Josephus, Bk. v. chap. 12.

² Ibid. vi. chap. 1.

besieged were reduced : “ When they came to the houses to plunder them, they found in them entire families of dead men, and the upper room full of dead corpses,—that is, of such as died by the famine ; they then stood in a horror at this sight, and went out without touching anything.”¹ Of those that the famine had spared (and eleven hundred thousand had fallen victims to it), ninety-seven thousand were carried captive—the most promising of their youth,—to the mines of Egypt.”²

“ Oh that My people would have hearkened unto Me ; for if Israel had walked in My ways, I should soon have put down their enemies, and turned My Hand against their adversaries.” (Ps. lxxxi. 14, 15).

¹ Josephus, Bk. vi. chap. 8.

² Hosea viii. 13, “ He will visit their sins, and they shall return into Egypt;” and Hosea ix. 8, “ They shall not dwell in the Lord’s land, but Ephraim shall return to Egypt.”

S. CLEMENT OF ROME,

BISHOP AND MARTYR.

“ As heavenly blue breaks on a troubled deep,
A voice of gentle blame,
From the calm grave where Paul and Peter sleep,
Unto their children came,
From Rome to Corinth. O'er the rising din
It swelled, as from their purer seats above,
And, like a solemn undersound therein,
Paul's moving tone. It was thy watchful love,
Clement, whose name is in the Book of Life,
The while thy Church, true to heaven's sacred mould,
'Mid persecution, poverty and strife,
Glorious within, and wrought of purest gold,
Began, 'mid hanging mists, her greatness to unfold.”

The Cathedral.



S. CLEMENT OF ROME.

“ How beautiful your presence, how benign,
Servants of God ! who not a thought will share
With the vain world ;
Such priest
Might seem a saintly image from its shrine
Descended ; evil thoughts are stayed
At his approach, and low bowed necks entreat
A benediction from his voice or hand.”

Wordsworth's Eccles. Sonnets.

S. CLEMENT MENTIONED BY S. PAUL—HIS BIRTH—AND EDUCATION—ORDAINED BY S. PETER—BECOMES BISHOP OF ROME—HIS EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH OF CORINTH—PRIESTLY AUTHORITY OF DIVINE ORIGIN—S. PAUL TO THE HEBREWS TRANSLATED BY S. CLEMENT—PERSECUTION UNDER DOMITIAN—UNDER NERO—LETTER OF PLINY THE YOUNGER TO TRAJAN—THE EMPEROR'S REPLY—S. CLEMENT IS BANISHED TO CHERSON—HIS MARTYRDOM—CHURCH OF SAN CLEMENTE IN ROME.

ALTHOUGH the history of this, the earliest of the Apostolic Fathers, is but little known to us, beyond some few leading facts in his life, one, his first historian, has written such words concerning him, as to leave us in no doubt as to the blessed and holy character of S. Clement.

Whilst then, we must long to learn all that is possible concerning one so highly favoured, so we may remember that the Wise King has compared some words to “deep waters;” and surely such are those few written by S. Paul: “Clement also, and other my fellow-labourers, *whose names are in the Book of Life.*” Concerning which words, an Archbishop of our Church says: “A character which, if we will allow our Saviour to be the Judge, far exceeds that of the highest power and dignity; and Who therefore, when His disciples began to rejoice upon the account of that authority which He had bestowed upon them, ‘insomuch that even the devils were subject unto them’ (Luke x. 17); though He seemed to allow that there was a just matter of joy in such an extraordinary power, yet bade them not to rejoice so much in this,—that those spirits were subject unto them,—‘but rather,’ ‘rejoice that your names are written in the Book of Life.’”¹

S. Clement was a Roman, and supposed to have first seen the light upon the Mons Cælius. We cannot now tell whether the statement made by many early writers, that Faustinus, father to the saint, was of the imperial blood and educated with Tiberius, is correct or not; it has been asserted, on the other hand, that he was of Jewish extraction. But it matters little, nor

¹ Archbp. Wake, “Of S. Clement’s Epistle,” 3rd Edit. 1719.

would he, whose name is inscribed upon the Book of Life, reckon it as any matter of importance whether it was found or not upon the royal roll of the Cæsars. In those times, when to bear the name of Christian was not a matter of course, but a pledge of self-renunciation and devotion, exposing him who bore it to sorrow and persecution, it was esteemed by the faithful as the noblest of names, the most glorious of ranks, and they gloried in bearing Christian as their name,—Catholic, as their surname.¹

S. Clement was first instructed in the Faith by S. Peter, when at Cæsarea. He afterwards shared the labours of S. Paul, conjointly with SS. Luke and Timothy; for some time being a partaker of their sufferings in their Master's cause in many a perilous journey, according to S. Chrysostom. Much has been said and written concerning the date and the particulars of his elevation to the Bishopric of Rome; at all events it may be considered certain, that Clement received his episcopal ordination at the hands of S. Peter,² who, it has been asserted, made him

¹ Bingham Antiq. Bk. i. chap. 1.

² Tertullian bears witness to this, saying: “If there be any heresies, whoever venture to place themselves in the midst of the age of the Apostles, that they may therefore be thought to have been handed down from the Apostles, because they existed under the Apostles, we may say, let them make known the originals of their Churches; let them unfold the roll of their bishops so coming down in

his vicar during his missionary absences from Rome. However this might be, he was undoubtedly Bishop of Rome at the time when he addressed his most beautiful and apostolic epistle to the Corinthians, the only one of the several writings ascribed to S. Clement which is undoubtedly his.

Throughout the primitive Church it seems to have been a living principle that, though for order and convenience sake each Bishop had his separate and special charge; yet that all being devoted but to one object—the promotion of God's Glory, and the welfare of His Church,—all should be ready to meet any call made upon them, as well from without, as in their own dioceses; “though there were many pastors, yet they had but one flock to feed, and every one was obliged to take care of all the sheep of Christ, which He had purchased with His Blood.”¹ Thus Bingham says speaking of the

succession from the beginning, that their first bishop had for his ordainer and predecessor some one of the Apostles, or of apostolic men, so he were one that continued steadfast with the Apostles. For in this manner do Apostolic Churches reckon their origin: as the Church of Smyrna recounteth that Polycarp was placed there by John; as that of Rome doth, that Clement was in like manner ordained by Peter. Just so can the rest also show those, whom, being appointed by the Apostles to the episcopate, they have as transmitters of the apostolic seed.”—*De Præsc. Hær.* 32.

¹ Bingham, Bk. ii. chap. 5.

office of Bishops, in relation to the whole Catholic Church: "Every Bishop was supposed to have an equal share in the superintendency over the whole Catholic Church, not as to what concerned external polity and government, but the prime essential part of religion, the preservation of the Christian Faith. Whenever the Faith was in danger of being subverted by heresy or destroyed by persecution, then every Bishop thought it part of his duty and office to put to his helping hand, and labour as much for any other diocese as his own. Dioceses were but limits of convenience, for the preservation of order in times of peace; but the Faith was a more universal thing, and when war was made upon that, then the whole world was but one diocese, and the whole Church but one flock, and every pastor thought himself obliged to feed his Great Master's sheep according to his power, whatever part of the world they were scattered in. In this sense, every Bishop was a universal pastor and Bishop of the whole world, as having a common care and concern for the whole Church of Christ."

In accordance with this principle, worthy of the servants of Him Who came to seek and to save that which was lost, S. Clement addressed himself to the Church of Corinth, wherein great disorders had arisen, certain factious and seditious people having excited a rebellion against their spiritual governors, which at last became a

grievous schism ; and the turbulent spirits of the laity even led them so far as to lay violent hands on the pastors set over them by God, whom they deposed.

The whole of the epistle written on this occasion by S. Clement, breathes a spirit of deep love and compassion, even whilst most earnestly deprecating that “ wicked and detestable sedition,” as he called it, into which the Corinthians had fallen. He begins by reminding them of the blessedness they once spoke of; how they “ did all things without respect of persons, and walked according to the laws of God, being subject to those who had the rule over you . . . Ye were all humble-minded, not boasting of anything, desiring rather to be subject than to govern, to give than to receive; being content with the portion God had dispensed to you, hearkening diligently to His Word, having His Sufferings always before your eyes. Thus a firm, and blessed, and profitable peace was given unto you, and an insatiable desire of doing good. . . . Ye were sincere, and without offence towards each other, not mindful of injuries; all sedition and schism was an abomination unto you.”¹ S. Clement then proceeds to attribute their disorders to their prosperity, by which they had been led astray and had abused it: “ All honour and enlargement was given unto you, and so

¹ S. Clement to the Cor., Archbishop Wake's translation.

was fulfilled that which is written: ‘My beloved did eat and drink, he was enlarged and waxed fat, and kicked.’ From hence come emulation, and envy, and strife, and sedition. . . . Therefore righteousness and peace are departed from you, because every one hath forsaken the fear of God, and is grown blind in his faith; nor walketh by the rule of God’s commandments, nor liveth as is fitting in Christ. But every one follows his own wicked lusts; having taken up an unjust and wicked envy, by which death first entered into the world.”

After bringing forward Cain and Abel as an instance, S. Clement continues: “Ye see, brethren, how envy and emulation wrought the death of a brother. For this our father Jacob fled from the face of his brother Esau. It was this that caused Joseph to be persecuted even unto death, and to come into bondage. Envy forced Moses to flee from the face of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, when he heard his own countrymen ask him: ‘Who made thee a judge and a ruler over us?’ Through envy Aaron and Miriam were shut out of the camp from the rest of the congregation seven days. Emulation sent Dathan and Abiram quick into the grave, because they raised up a sedition against Moses the servant of God. For this David was not only hated of strangers, but was persecuted even by Saul, the king of Israel. . . These things, beloved, we write unto you, not only for your instruction, but also for your own

remembrance. For we are all in the same lists, and the same combat is prepared for us all. Wherefore let us lay aside all vain and empty cares, and let us come up to the glorious and venerable rule of our holy calling. Let us consider what is good, and acceptable, and well-pleasing in the Sight of Him that made us. Let us look stedfastly to the Blood of Christ, and see how precious His Blood is in the Sight of God, Which being shed for our Salvation, has obtained the grace of repentance for all the world. Let us search into all the ages that have gone before us, and let us learn that our Lord has, in every one of them, still given place for repentance, to all such as would turn to Him. Noah preached repentance, and as many as hearkened to him were saved. Jonah denounced destruction against the Ninevites ; howbeit, they repenting of their sins, appeased God by their prayers, and were saved, though they were strangers to the covenant of God. Hence we find how all the ministers of God have spoken by the Holy Spirit of repentance."

S. Clement then reminds the Corinthians of some of God's promises to those who truly repent, and proceeds to point out some of the virtuous fruits of repentance (*i.e.* turning from evil), as illustrated in Scripture : in Abraham,¹

¹ Hospitality was reckoned a prominent virtue in the Primitive Church ; not, however, in the sense that it is now too generally accepted. The early Christians took

faith, obedience, and hospitality; in Lot, hospitality and godliness; in Rahab,¹ Faith and hospitality. And urging them to lay aside all pride, and boasting, and anger, he exhorts the Corinthians to "hold fast to those who religiously desire peace, and not to those who only pretend to desire it For Christ is theirs who are humble." And he enlarges upon the humility of the Saviour and His followers, continuing: "Having therefore, so many and such great and glorious examples, let us return to that peace, which was the mark that from the beginning was set before us; let us look up to the Father and Creator of the whole world; and

practically our Lord's injunction: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen nor thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." (Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14.) Accordingly it was a rule of the bishops, to keep an open table for the stranger and the poor, whilst they themselves led very ascetic lives. For the most part, they avoided giving "great entertainments to the rich, which is but a false-named hospitality."

¹ S. Clement interprets the scarlet thread which Rahab hung out of her window for a token of safety, as a type or foreshadowing of that Precious Blood, Which should be Redemption to all that believe and hope in God. He is followed in this interpretation by Justin Martyr.—*Dial. Tryph.*, cxi.

let us hold fast to His glorious and exceeding gifts and benefits of peace. Let us consider and behold with the eyes of our understanding His long-suffering Will, and think how gentle and patient He is towards His whole creation. The heavens, moving by His appointment, are subject to Him in peace. Day and night accomplish the courses that He has allotted unto them, not disturbing one another. The sun and moon, and all the several companies and constellations of the stars, run the courses that He has appointed to them in concord, without departing in the least from them. The fruitful earth yields its food plentifully in due season, both to man and beast, and to all animals that are upon it, according to His Will; not disputing, nor altering anything of what was ordered by Him. So, also, the unfathomable and unsearchable floods of the deep are kept in by His command. And the conflux of the vast sea, being brought together by His order into its several collections, passes not the bounds that He has set to it, but as He appointed it, so it remains. The ocean, unpassable to mankind, and the worlds that are beyond it,¹ are governed by the

¹ It is curious to find this passage, “the worlds that are beyond the ocean,” commented upon by Photius as objectionable: as though it were presumptuous in S. Clement to suppose the existence of unknown worlds. Tillemont remarks upon this criticism with a quiet satire: “Cette remarque ne doit pas nous donner beaucoup de

same commands of their Great Master. Spring and summer, autumn and winter, give place peaceably to each other. The several quarters of the winds fulfil their work in the seasons, without offending one another . . . All these has the Great Creator and Lord of all, commanded to observe peace and concord, being good to all, but especially to us, who flee to His Mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory and majesty for ever and ever. Amen. Take heed, brethren, that His many blessings be not to us to condemnation, except we shall walk worthy of Him, doing with one consent what is good and pleasing in His Sight. The Spirit of the Lord is a candle searching out the inward parts of the belly. (Prov. xx. 27.) Let us, therefore, consider how near He is to us, and how that none of our thoughts, or reasonings which we frame within ourselves, are hid from Him. . . He is the Searcher of the counsels of the heart, Whose Breath is in us, and when He pleases, He can take it from us."

After continuing to enlarge upon the knowledge and compassion of the All-powerful, S. Clement turns to the subject of the Resurrection; whereon the Corinthians had already received the most sublime and comprehensive instruction ever composed, from his teacher and fellow-

peine, depuis que nous savons avec assurance ce que les anciens n'avançaient qu'avec incertitude." — *Vie de S. Clem. Ar. iv.*

labourer, S. Paul. For this reason probably, he does not so much seek to convince them of the truth of the doctrine, as to lead them to rule their lives by that knowledge and that hope. “Let us therefore come to Him with holiness of heart, lifting up chaste and undefiled hands unto Him, loving our Gracious and Merciful Father, Who hath made us to partake of His Election.”

And then, gathering together the practical duties which are acceptable in the Sight of God, S. Clement exhorts the Corinthians to be “ready and forward in well doing. . . . Let our boasting and our confidence be in God; let us submit ourselves to His Will. . . . Let us also, being gathered together in concord with one another, as it were with one mouth, cry earnestly unto Him that he would make us partakers of His great and glorious Promises. . . . We must fix our minds, by faith, towards God, and seek those things that are holy and acceptable unto Him. We must act conformably to His Holy Will, and follow the Way of Truth; casting off from us all unrighteousness and iniquity, together with all covetousness, strife, evil manners, deceit, whispering, detractions, hatred of God, pride, and boasting, vain-glory, and ambition; for they that do such things are odious to God, and also all such as approve of those that do them. . . . Let every one be subject to his neighbour, according to the order in which he is placed by the Gift of God. Let not the strong man de-

spise the weak ; and let the weak see that he reverence the strong. Let the rich man distribute to the necessity of the poor ; and let the poor bless God that he has given one unto him by whom his want may be supplied. Let the wise man show forth his wisdom, not in words, but in good works. Let him that is humble not bear witness to himself, but let him leave it to another to bear witness of him."

And now, having gradually as it were, worked his way on to the immediate act of guilt which the Corinthians had committed—deposing their pastor—S. Clement says, “ It will behove us to take care that, looking into the depths of the Divine Knowledge, we do all things in order, whatsoever our Lord has commanded us to do ; and particularly that we perform our offerings and services to God at their appointed seasons ; for these He has commanded to be done, not rashly and disorderly, but at certain determinate times and hours. And therefore He has ordained by His supreme Will and Authority, both where, and by what persons they are to be performed ; that so all things being piously done, unto all well pleasing, they may be acceptable unto Him. . . . And the same care must be had of the persons that minister unto Him. . . . The Apostles have preached to us from our Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ from God. Christ, therefore, was sent by God, the Apostles by Christ ; so both were orderly sent, according to the Will of God.

For, having received their command, and being thoroughly assured by the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and convinced by the Word of God, with the Fulness of the Holy Spirit, they went abroad, publishing that the Kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits of their conversions to be bishops and ministers over such as should afterwards believe, having first proved them by the Spirit." After confirming the doctrine of an appointed ministry from the Old Testament, S. Clement proceeds : " So our Apostles knew, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that there should contentions arise upon the account of the ministry ; and having therefore a perfect foreknowledge of this, they appointed persons, as we have before said, and then gave direction how, when they should die, other chosen and approved men should succeed in their ministry. Wherefore we cannot think that those may justly be thrown out of their ministry who were appointed either by them, or afterwards chosen by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole Church, and who have with all lowliness and innocence ministered to the flock of Christ in peace, and without self-interest. . . . Blessed are those priests, who, having finished their course before these times, have obtained a fruitful and perfect dissolution, for they have no fear lest any one should turn them out of the place which is now appointed for them. But we

see how you have put out some who lived reputably among you from the ministry, which by their innocence they had adorned. . . . In Holy Scripture you shall not find that righteous men were ever cast off by such as were good themselves. . . . Wherefore are these strifes, and divisions, and schisms, and wars among us? Have we not all one God, and one Christ? . . . Remember the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ; how He said, ‘Woe to that man by whom offences come.’ . . . Your schism has perverted many, has discouraged many; it has caused diffidence in many, and grief in us all.¹ . . . Let us therefore, with all haste, put an end to this sedition, and let us fall down before the Lord, and beseech Him with tears, that He would be favourably reconciled to us, and restore us again to a seemly and holy course of brotherly love: for this is the Gate of Righteousness, opening unto Life. . . . Let a man be faithful, let him be powerful in the utterance of knowledge, let him be wise in making an exact judgment of words, let him be pure in all his actions, but still by how much the more

¹ Is not this an argument which those who are guilty of schism from conscientious motives would do well to take into deep consideration? the discouragement and stumbling blocks which they throw in the way of their brethren? If the self-chosen acts of separation (so pre-eminently an exercise of private judgment) be a false step and a sinful one (and will the most confident wholly put aside all possibility of its so being?) how will not its weight be aggravated at the Day of Judgment, if others have been led by our

he seems to be above others by reason of these things, by so much the more will it behove him to be humble-minded, and to seek what is profitable to all men, and not his own advantage."

S. Clement enlarges upon the beauty and fulness of Charity, and then urges those he addresses to show forth their penitence : " It is seemly for a man to confess wherein he has transgressed, and not to harden his heart, as the hearts of those were hardened who raised up sedition against Moses, the Servant of God. . . . Wherefore let us also pray for such as are fallen into sin ; that, being endued with humility and moderation, they may submit, not unto us, but to the Will of God. For by this means they shall obtain a fruitful and perfect remembrance, with mercy, both in our prayers to God, and in our mention of them before His Saints. Let us receive correction, at which no man ought to repine. . . . Do ye therefore who laid the first foundation of this sedition, submit yourselves unto your priests, and be instructed unto Repentance, bending the

example to commit the same sin ? Or if we have only been the means of awakening doubts and perplexities which have haunted and disturbed their faith, distracted their prayers, and lessened the gladness even of their communion, thereby hindering and impeding their spiritual progress ; will it not be a heavy addition to our bitter and useless repentance then, when not only our acts towards our fellow-men, but our influences over them, and their right disposal, will all be brought forward for our justification or condemnation ?

knees of your hearts ; learn to be subject, laying aside all proud and arrogant boasting of your tongues ; for it is better for you to be found little, and approved in the Sheepfold of Christ, than to seem to yourselves better than others, and be cast out of His Fold. For thus speaks the excellent and all-virtuous Wisdom : ‘ Turn you at My reproof ; behold I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My Words unto you. Because I called and ye refused ; I have stretched out My Hand and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all My Counsel, and would none of My Reproof ; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish come upon you ; then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord ; they would none of My Counsel, they despised all My Reproof ; therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.’ ”

S. Clement sums up his Epistle with a solemn invocation of the Divine Blessing : “ Now, God the Inspector of all things, the Father of Spirits, and the Lord of all flesh, Who hath chosen our Lord Jesus Christ, and us by Him, to be His peculiar people, grant to every soul of man that

calleth upon His Glorious and Holy Name, faith, fear, peace, long-suffering, patience, temperance, holiness, and sobriety, unto all well-pleasing in His Sight, through our High Priest and Protector Jesus Christ, by Whom be glory, and majesty, and power, and honour, unto Him now and for evermore. Amen." We cannot wonder that this beautiful and instructive epistle was highly prized in the Primitive Church, so much so that it was ranked next in value to the Inspired Writings, and was frequently read in the churches.¹

It is said that S. Paul having written his Epistle to the Hebrews in his native tongue, it was translated by S. Clement; and a similarity of style and phraseology has been traced between the two epistles.²

S. Clement was Bishop of Rome during the persecution suffered by the Church under Domitian, who especially sought to extirpate the family of David, whence sprang Christ the Lord; fearing lest they should assert a temporal dominion. Eusebius gives the account from Hegisippus: "There were yet living of the family of our Lord, the grandchildren of Judas, called the brother of our Lord after the flesh. These were reported as being of the family of David, and were brought to Domitian; for this emperor

¹ It was still publicly read in the Church when Eusebius wrote early in the fourth century.

² Eusebius, Book iii. chap. 38.

was as much alarmed at the appearance of Christ as Herod. He put the question whether they were of David's race, and they confessed that they were." On further inquiry, the men showed that they were very poor, and their hands, hard with labour, bore them witness that it was so. Domitian further questioned them concerning Christ and His Kingdom, which they said was not temporal, but celestial. At last they were dismissed, as too insignificant to be heeded.¹

Foremost among those whom Domitian caused to perish for their Faith, was his own cousin, Flavius Clemens, and his wife Domitilla was sent into banishment.² Under this Emperor likewise the Apostle S. John was banished to the island of Patmos, where he was granted the beatific vision recorded in the Revelations, and where he is generally supposed to have enjoyed tranquillity, until the reign of Nerva permitted the venerated Saint of God to return to his people.

But Domitian died by assassination from the hand of Stephen, a freedman, and his memory was condemned by the Senate. The Christians found rest under the peaceful reign of Nerva, Under Trajan, however, their troubles recommenced, though not in so terrible a degree as

¹ Eusebius, Book iii. chap. 20.

² "Domitian, who was somewhat of a Nero in cruelty."
—*Tertul. Apol.* i. 5.

under Nero and Domitian. Yet persecution and torture were not unknown to the Christians, as we find from a letter¹ written by Pliny the younger, then Pro-Prætor of the provinces of Pontus and Bithynia. "It is sir, a rule which I prescribe to myself, to consult you upon all difficult occasions. For who can better direct my doubts, or instruct my ignorance ? I have never been present at the resolutions taken concerning the Christians ; therefore I know not for what causes, or how far they may be objects of punishment ; or to what degree our complaints may be carried on against them. Nor have I hesitated a little in considering, whether the difference of age should not make some variation in our procedures ; or whether the weaker and the more robust, should be equally punished. Are those who repent to be pardoned ? Or is it to no purpose to renounce Christianity, after having once professed it ? Must they be punished for the name, although otherwise innocent ? Or is the name itself so flagitious as to be punishable ? In the mean-

¹ This correspondence, Milman calls the most valuable record of early Christian history of this period. It represents to us Paganism already claiming the alliance of power to maintain its decaying influence; Christianity proceeding, in its silent course, imperfectly understood by a wise and polite Pagan, yet with nothing to offend his moral judgment, except his contumacious repugnance to the common usages of society.—Book ii. chap. vi.

time, I have pursued this method with those Christians, who, as such, have been brought before me. I have asked them if they were Christians, and to those who have avowed the profession, I have put the same question a second and a third time, and have enforced it by threats of punishment. When they have persevered, I have put my threats into execution. For I did not in the least doubt, that whatever their confession might be, their audacious behaviour, and immovable behaviour, required absolute punishment. Some, who were infected with the same kind of madness, but were Roman citizens, have been reserved by me to be sent to Rome. Soon afterwards the crime, as it often happens, by being pursued, became more diffusive, and a variety of matters of fact were specified to me. An information, without a name, was put into my hands, containing a list of many persons, who deny that they are, or ever were Christians; for, repeating the form of invocation after me, they called upon the gods, and offered incense, and made libations to your image, which upon this occasion I had ordered to be brought out with the statues of the deities: and they uttered imprecations against Christ, to which no true Christian, as they affirm, can be compelled by any punishment whatever. I thought it best, therefore, to release them. Others of them who were named to me by an informer, have said that they were Christians,

and have immediately afterwards denied it, by confessing that they had been of that persuasion, but had now entirely renounced the error, some three years, some more, and some even above twenty years. All these worshipped your image, and the images of the gods, and they even vented imprecations against Christ; they affirmed that the sum total of their fault, or of their error, consisted in assembling upon a certain stated day before it was light, to sing alternately among themselves hymns to Christ, as to a God; binding themselves by oath, not to be guilty of wickedness, not to steal, nor to rob; not to commit adultery, nor break their faith when plighted, not to deny the deposits in their hands, whenever called upon to restore them. These ceremonies performed, they usually departed, and came together again to take a repast, the meat of which was innocent, and eaten promiscuously; but they had desisted from this custom since my edict, wherein, by your commands, I had prohibited all public assemblies. From these circumstances, I thought it more necessary to try to gain the truth, even by torture, from two women, who were said to officiate at their worship.¹ But I could discover only an obstinate

¹ These must have been deaconesses—Pliny using the word “ministræ,” which corresponds to διάκονοι, the original Greek word for deaconesses. They were usually widows (though not invariably), who were appointed to fulfil certain offices in the Church; such as acting as a

kind of superstition, carried to great excess. And, therefore, postponing any resolution of my own, I have waited the result of your judgment. To me an affair of this sort seems worthy of your consideration, principally from the multitude involved in the danger. For many persons of all ages, of all degrees, and of both sexes, are already, and will be constantly brought into danger by these accusations. Nor is this superstitious contagion confined only to the cities ; it spreads itself through the villages and the country. As yet, I think it may be stopped and corrected."

The Emperor's reply shows a mild spirit, though blinded by misappreciation of the Faith which he esteemed it his duty to repress : " You have exactly pursued the method which you ought, in examining the several causes of those

sort of private catechist to the female catechumens who were preparing for baptism, and assisting at the administration of the rite itself ; visiting and attending upon the sick women, and in times of danger and persecution ministering to the martyrs in prison ; because they could more easily gain access to them, and go with less suspicion, and less danger and hazard of their lives from the heathen, than the more noted priests and deacons could do. In those parts of the Church where men or women were separated during public worship, the deaconesses kept the door appropriated to the latter. This order of female helpers to the ministry began to be abandoned in the fifth century, and by the tenth or eleventh, it had altogether ceased to exist in the Catholic Church.—See Bingham's *Antiq.* Book ii. chap. 22.

persons, who as Christians were brought before you. For in an affair of this general nature, it is impossible to lay down any settled form. The Christians need not be sought after. If they are brought into your presence and convicted, they must be punished; but with this reservation, that if any one of them has denied himself to be a Christian, and makes his assertion manifest, by an invocation to our gods, although he may have been suspected before, his repentance must entitle him to a pardon. But anonymous informations ought not to have the least weight against any crime whatever. They would not only be of dangerous consequence, but are absolutely against the maxim of any government."¹

It was during the reign of Trajan that the holy Clement ended his earthly labours and began his heavenly rest. He has ever been accounted by the Church as a martyr, although the precise circumstances of his death are not

¹ Pliny's Epist. No. xvii. Tertullian thus speaks of this correspondence: "The second Pliny, while governor of a province, when some Christians had been condemned, some degraded, being nevertheless troubled by their very numbers, asked of Trajan their emperor, what he should do for the future, alleging that, excepting their obstinacy in not sacrificing, he had discovered nothing else touching their religious mysteries, save meetings before daybreak to sing to Christ as God, and to form a common bond of discipline, forbidding murder, adultery, fraud, perfidy, and other crimes. Then wrote Trajan back, that this sect should not indeed be inquired after, but when brought before him must be

known. One early history¹ narrates that S Clement, having converted to the Christian Faith, Sisinnius (a kinsman of the late Emperor Nerva) and his wife, Theodora, together with other conspicuous and well-known persons, a disturbance was excited in Rome by certain opponents to the Faith, who brought the Bishop before Mamer tinus, the prefect. S. Clement refused to sacrifice to the gods, and in consequence was sentenced by an imperial mandate to be banished to Cherson, beyond the Pontic sea, where criminals were employed in the mines and marble quarries, exposed to great sufferings, of cold, hunger, and thirst. Many Christians had already been banished thither, and these derived great

punished. O sentence necessarily confounding itself! He forbiddeth that they should be inquired after, as though they were innocent, and commandeth that they should be punished, as though they were guilty! He spareth and rageth, and winketh and punisheth! Why, O sentence, dost thou overreach thyself? If thou condemnest, why dost not thou also inquire? if thou inquirest not, why dost not thou also acquit? . . . Against men accused of treason, and public enemies, every man is a soldier. . . . The Christian alone may not be inquired after, but may be brought before the court; as though inquiry had any other object than to bring him there. Ye condemn him, therefore, when brought before you, whom none would have inquired after; who, I suppose, hath already deserved punishment, not because he is guilty, but because, when not inquired after, he was found."—*Tertul. Apol. i. 2.*

¹ See Cave's Life of S. Clement, vii.

encouragement and fortitude from the exhortations of the holy exile now added to their band ; so that, at last, finding that the Word of God could not be bound,¹ but that every way "Christ is preached," the president sought to check the danger which threatened paganism, by killing Clement, who was accordingly drowned in the sea,—this manner of death being chosen, for fear lest his brethren in the Faith should recover his body, and even the lifeless corpse should wage war against heathenism. S. Clement might well meet his death with the words of his great Teacher and Fellow-labourer : " I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."²

In modern Rome, if after leaving the Colosseum, you proceed along the Via S. Giovanni (formerly called Via Maggiore) towards the magnificent church of the Lateran, you will find midway a low, and externally not very notable church, bearing the name of S. Clement, and supposed to stand upon the site of his episcopal dwelling. It is one of the oldest churches in

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 9.

² Phil. i. 19-22.

Rome, S. Jerome and other early writers bearing witness to its existence in their day. At various times it has been restored by different popes, but San Clemente still boasts of being the most accurate model of the arrangement of the first Christian churches.¹ The ancient vestibule has been replaced by a piazza, but the nave remains in its original form, divided into three parts. In the choir are two ambones, or reading desks, with steps by which they were entered facing eastward, and descending westward. The bema or sanctuary, is separated from the body of the church by cancelli or rails. The apsis contains the episcopal throne and the lower seats for the presbyters, forming a semicircular line on each side.

The 23d of November is the day commemorated by the Church, in memory of the Bishop and Martyr S. Clement.

¹ Nibby's Roma. "È questa di tutte le chiese di Roma la sola che abbia meno sofferto cangimenti nella pianta sua primitiva."



S. IGNATIUS,

BISHOP AND MARTYR.

"As one by one, stars on the eastern space
 Come forth, while daylight fades,
And greet each other to their heavenly place ;
 Thus, while death's deepening shades
Darken around thy steps in stranger lands,
 Sweet awful memories of thine own S. John
Wake round thee : martyr'd Peter beckoning stands,
 And stirs again the Spirit's benison
Given through his hands : upon the self-same road,
 Lo, the bright footsteps of the death-bound Paul !
Thy soul is fann'd to burning hardihood ;
 We hear in thee the Bridegroom's warning call,
And full of glowing life Thy dying accents fall."

The Cathedral.



S. IGNATIUS, BISHOP AND MARTYR.

CHAPTER I.

"At home, abroad, in peace, in war,
Thy God shall thee defend,
Conduct thee through life's pilgrimage,
Safe to thy journey's end."

Psalm cxxi.

TRADITION CONCERNING THE CHILDHOOD OF S. IGNATIUS—
HIS TRAINING UNDER S. JOHN—ORDAINED BY THE APOSTLES—APPOINTED BISHOP OF ANTIOCH—HIS EPISCOPAL CARES—APPEARS BEFORE TRAJAN—IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH—BEGINS HIS JOURNEY TO ROME—REASONS FOR THE MARTYRS BEING REMOVED FROM THEIR HOMES—IGNATIUS REACHES SELEUCIA—RUFUS AND ZOZIMUS—S. IGNATIUS ARRIVES AT SMYRNA—S. POLYCARP—S. IGNATIUS WRITES TO THE EPHESIANS—TO THE MAGNESIANS—TO THE TRALLIANS—TO THE ROMANS.

It has been said: "Judge none blessed before his death" (Eccl. xi. 28); but when the combat of life is over, and having "striven for the truth unto death, the Lord hath fought for him,"¹ then knowing that "the souls of the

¹ Eccl. iv. 28.

righteous are in the Hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them,"¹ we may joy fearlessly over such, that their day of rest and rejoicing is come. So in the Primitive Church, we find much thought and attention given to the closing scene of the lives of those to whom the brethren looked as their Fathers in the Faith ; that final act being justly reckoned by them as the most important of their earthly existence.

Until within a short period of his martyrdom, we know but little concerning S. Ignatius. There is a tradition that he was the favoured child whom the Saviour took in His Arms, and set in the midst of His Disciples, saying, " Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My Name, receiveth Me ; "² but this cannot be in any way satisfactorily proved ; on the contrary, S. Chrysostom expressly affirms that Ignatius had never seen the Saviour whilst on earth.³ Little does it now matter to him who, for seventeen hundred years, has rested within those Almighty Arms, never to be taken Thence, but for ever to be with the Lord.

The tradition has not improbably arisen out of the name of Theophorus, which Ignatius bore,⁴ and which, according to the accentuation, is to

¹ Wisdom iii. 1.

² S. Mark ix. 36.

³ Homilies in Ignatius v. 4.

⁴ " Ignatius was called Theophorus, for the same reason that any other divine or excellent person might have been so called ; i.e., upon account of his admirable piety, because his soul was full of the love of God, and sanctified

be interpreted, Borne of (or by) God, or Bearing God.¹ And from S. Ignatius's own words, when brought before the Emperor Trajan, it is evident that he himself used it in the latter sense, "bearing God." As S. John says, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."²

Equally without foundation is the story, that after death the heart of S. Ignatius was found inscribed with the Name of Jesus Christ, in golden letters; for the narration of his sufferings by those who were eye-witnesses, tells us that nothing remained of his body but a few bones.³

with an extraordinary portion of the Divine Grace."—*Archb. Wake*. "The early Christians were not unfrequently styled Theophori and Christophori in the same sense, as the temples of God."—*Bingham*, i. 1.

¹ "The accent placed on the penultima of Θεοφόρος, denotes it of an active signification, *one that carrieth God*; but of the passive, *carried of God*, if placed on the ante-penultima."—*Butler's Life of S. Ignatius*.

² 1 John iv. 15.

³ Was it this tradition which called forth Herbert's beautiful lines?—

"Jesus is in my heart, His sacred Name
Is deeply carved there; but the other week
A great affliction broke the little frame
E'en all to pieces, which I went to seek:
And first I found the corner where was I,
After where ES, and next where U was graved.
When I had got these parcels, instantly
I sat me down to spell them, and perceived
That to my broken heart He was *I ease you*,
And so my whole is JESU."

The first years of this saint were passed under training of the blessed Apostle S. John, as is mentioned in the Acts of his Martyrdom. His fellow-disciple was one who likewise glorified God both in his life and death,—S. Polycarp, afterwards Bishop of Smyrna. Perhaps S. John was addressing these two, amongst others of his spiritual children, when he wrote, “I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.”¹

S. Chrysostom bears testimony also to S. Ignatius’ having been the disciple and companion of others of the Apostles, both S. Peter and S. Paul being amongst those from whom he received words of counsel and instruction.² From their hands,³ likewise, he received episcopal ordination, and upon the death of Evodius, first Bishop of Antioch, Ignatius succeeded him in the spiritual charge of that most important city, the metropolis of Syria, which has always

¹ John ii. 14.

² “He was contemporary with the Apostles, and partook of those spiritual fountains. What sort of man must not he have been, who was nourished up with, and associated with them, and participated with them in things utterable and unutterable, and was by them judged worthy of so great an office?” *S. Chrysos. Homil. in Ignat.* And again: “He received his office from those holy ones, and the hands of the blessed Apostles touched his sacred head.”—*Ibid.*

³ Euseb. bk. iii. chap. 36.

been specially esteemed by ecclesiastical writers, as having been the first place where the name of Christian was borne by the Faithful.¹

Much we do not learn of the affairs of this Church until the time approached when its holy Bishop was to be taken away from it. The Christian of that day was cast upon a stormy and tempestuous sea, and many a time the feeble were in danger of being swallowed up by the billows of persecution ; but Ignatius, “ by the helm of prayer and fasting, by the constancy of his doctrine and spiritual labour, withstood the raging floods, fearing lest they should sink those who either wanted courage, or were not well grounded in the Faith.”²

The see of Antioch was no light charge. Two hundred thousand persons were under the spiritual charge of the Bishop ;³ and troubles, both from within and from without, pressed upon the Saint ; but he went on fearlessly, only prizing his life so long as he might be serviceable to his Master, but for himself ready to depart. “ Wherefore, when the persecution being at present somewhat abated, he rejoiced greatly at the tranquillity of his Church, yet was troubled as to himself, that he had not attained to a true love of Christ, nor was come up to the pitch of a perfect disciple. For he thought that

¹ See Theodorêt, bk. v. chap. 9. ² Act. Ignat. i.

³ Tillemont, S. Ignace, Act. ii. S. Chrys. Hom. in Ignat.

the confession which is made by martyrdom, would bring him to a yet more close and intimate union with the Lord. Wherefore, continuing a few years longer with the Church, and, after the manner of a divine lamp, illuminating the hearts of the Faithful by the exposition of the Holy Scriptures, he attained to what he had desired."¹

The mildness of Trajan has been lauded by some, and certainly he did not exercise the brutal, insensate tyranny of Nero or Domitian, yet under his reign the Christians suffered cruelly, though not uninterruptedly. Trajan esteemed it a political necessity that the Christian religion should not be permitted to predominate, and his actions were in accordance with this principle. On the field of battle he counted the slain by hundreds. What mattered it, that a few scores of obscure individuals perished by the sword or the stake, if as he considered to be the case, the public peace was advanced thereby?

About the year 107, Trajan came to Antioch to prepare for a military expedition against the Parthians and Armenians. He had lately gained a victory over the Scythians, in celebration of which, the Emperor made a triumphal entry into the city. Possibly the ceremony was accompanied by some pagan rites, in which the Christians refused to join; at all events the

¹ Act. Ignatius ii.

Emperor immediately on his arrival began to take measures for the support of the heathen worship, and called upon all men either to offer sacrifice to the false gods, or else to suffer the penalties of the law.

Willing if possible, to save his flock at the expense of his own life, the holy Bishop presented himself before Trajan, who addressed Ignatius thus : "What a wicked wretch art thou, thus not only to transgress our commands thyself, but to persuade others to do so likewise, and bring upon themselves destruction ?" To which Ignatius calmly answered : "It is not well so to call Theophorus, forasmuch as all wicked spirits are departed far from the servants of God. But if, because I am a trouble to those evil spirits, ye call me wicked, with regard to them I confess the charge ; for, having within me Christ the Heavenly King, I dissolve all the snares of the devils."

Trajan asked : "Who is Theophorus ?" "He who beareth Christ in his breast," was the saint's reply. Trajan indignantly asked him "whether the gods who caused him to gain the victory over his enemies, did not dwell within their true followers ?" "You err," Ignatius boldly answered, "in that you call the evil spirits of the heathen, gods ; for there is but One God, Who made Heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that are in them, and One Jesus Christ, His Only Begotten Son, into Whose Kingdom may it be granted me to enter."

Trajan asked in scorn: "Dost thou speak of His Kingdom Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?"

"Even so," replied Ignatius. "He Who by His Death hath crucified my sin, and the author of it, and has put all the deceit and malice of the devil under the feet of those who carry Him in their heart."

"Dost thou then, carry Him Who was crucified within thee?" asked the Emperor.

"I do," Ignatius answered confidently, "for it is written, I dwell in them, and walk in them."¹

The heathen Emperor needed no more, he thereupon passed sentence: "Forasmuch as Ignatius has confessed that he carries about within himself Him that was crucified, we command that he be carried, bound by soldiers, to the great city of Rome, there to be thrown to the beasts, for the entertainment of the people."

"When the holy martyr heard this sentence," so write they who were eye-witnesses of his trial,² "he cried out with joy, 'I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast vouchsafed to honour me with a perfect love towards Thee, and hast made me to be put into iron bonds with Thy Apostle Paul.'"³

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 16.

² "The Acts of S. Ignatius are said to have been written by Reus, Agathopodus, and Philo a deacon."—Butler.

³ Act. Ignatius vii.

And cheerfully he submitted to be laden with chains, ("those spiritual jewels," as he himself calls them), and after long and fervent prayers on behalf¹ of his Church, mingled with tears, not for himself, but lest any of his flock should lack fortitude in the time of trouble, he willingly gave himself up to his jailors to commence his last long journey. It has been a matter of surprise to some, that S. Ignatius should have been carried so far away from Antioch to suffer martyrdom; but there are several reasons which tend to make it less remarkable. The time for the public games at Rome was nigh at hand, and the populace welcomed no spectacle more gladly than the shedding of Christian blood. Tertullian some years later wrote: "None are more noisy clamourers for the punishment of the Christians than the mob."² And again he says, that on all occasions the cry of "the Christians to the lions!" was ready to burst forth. This taste Trajan might not be unwilling to indulge. Again, S. Ignatius was so universally beloved and respected in Antioch, where his piety was well known, that there was every probability that, were he to suffer there, far from repressing the growth of Christianity, his people would be confirmed and strengthened by his example, and cling yet more devotedly to that Faith in the Crucified which they had

¹ Ignat. Epistle to the Ephesians, xi.² Apol. i. 35.

learned from their Bishop, and for which they saw him joyfully shed his blood. Trajan might likewise have hoped to terrify the inhabitants of the countries through which the prisoner was carried, by thus publishing his resolution to put to death those who openly professed Christianity. How far this end was from being attained, we shall shortly see; on the contrary, the aged and fettered captive was like a standard borne through the land, attracting all who believed to come and gaze on him advancing to meet the lions of the Colosseum as bridegroom meets his bride; and teaching them, not by word only, but by a living example, that love is stronger than death.

“ Whoso feareth the Lord shall not fear nor be afraid; for He is his Hope. Blessed is the soul of him that feareth the Lord: to Whom doth he look? and Who is his Strength? For the Eyes of the Lord are upon them that love Him, He is their Mighty Protection and Strong Stay, a Defence from heat, and a Cover from the sun at noon, a Preservation from stumbling, and an Help from falling.”¹

¹ Eccl. xxiv. 14.

S. Chrysostom thus writes:—“ The devil did not permit the Bishops to be put to death in the cities over which they presided, but took them to a strange country to destroy them. And this he did both with the view of depriving them of their near connexions, and with the hope of enfeebling them by the fatigues of the journey. Thus he acted in the case of the blessed Ignatius. For

S. Ignatius was conducted to Seleucia, accompanied apparently by some members of his flock —amongst others by Rufus and Zozimus, whom S. Polycarp mentions by name, “Where-

he called him from one city to Rome, lengthening the doublings of his course, expecting by the length of the journey, and the multitude of his days, to depress his courage, not knowing that with Jesus as his Fellow-Traveller, and his Companion of his long journeyings in a foreign land, he would rather gain strength, and make a fuller manifestation of the Power that was with Him, Which so powerfully welded the Churches together. For the dwellers in the cities upon his road ran together from all sides, and anointed the combatant, and sent him on with much provision for the way, assisting him in the contest by prayers and embassies. And they received no common encouragement when they saw him hastening to death with the alacrity to be expected from one who was called to a kingdom in Heaven. And by his whole readiness and cheerfulness they learnt that it was not death to which he hastened, but a journey, a change of dwelling, an ascending into Heaven. These things did he teach, in word and in deed, in every city through which he passed. And as it happened to the Jews who bound Paul and sent him to Rome, supposing that they were sending him to death, but in fact they were sending him as a teacher to the Jews who dwelt there ; so did it happen in the case of Ignatius. For he came as an admired teacher, not only to the dwellers in Rome, but to all the cities which lay on the road, teaching them to despise this present life, and to think lightly of those things which are seen, and to love the things which as yet are unseen ; and looking up to Heaven, pay no attention to what appears terrible in this present life. In these things and more than these, instructing them by his deeds, did he journey on, like a sun rising in the east, and hastening to the west, yet with still

fore, I exhort all of you, that ye obey the word of righteousness, and exercise all patience which ye have seen set forth before your eyes, not only in the blessed Ignatius, and Zozimus, and Rufus,

greater brilliancy. For the sun moves above, and diffuses a light visible only to the senses; but Ignatius poured out his glories below, and infused into the mind a light visible to the reason—the light of his doctrine. And the sun, when it has reached its setting-place, is concealed, and forthwith the night comes on ; but Ignatius, when he had reached the place of his setting, rose from thence with increased lustre. Thus, after having conferred the greatest benefits upon all who were on his road, when he reached the city he instructed it too in philosophy. For therefore it was that God consented that he should lay down his life there, in order that his death might be a teacher of godliness to all who dwelt in Rome. You (S. Chrysostom is addressing the people of Antioch), by the Grace of God, stood in no need of any further manifestation, being rooted in the Faith; but those who lived in Rome, inasmuch as it abounded in iniquity, needed more assistance. Therefore, also, Peter and Paul, and their companions, were there put to death, partly indeed that they might cleanse by their own blood the city defiled with the blood of the idols, but in part also that by their actions they might give proof of the Resurrection of the Crucified Christ, and persuade those who dwelt in Rome, that they would not have despised this present life with so much readiness, if they had not been confident in themselves of ascending to the Crucified Jesus, and seeing Him in the Heavens. For in truth this is the greatest proof of the Resurrection, that the Christ Who was put to death, should, after His Death, manifest such power as to persuade living men to overlook their country and home, their friends and kinsmen, yea and their own life, in order to confess Him; and to choose scourging, dangers, and

but in others amidst yourselves; and in Paul himself, and the rest of the Apostles; being confident of this, that all these have not run in vain; but in Faith and Righteousness, and are gone to the place that was due to them from the Lord, with Whom also they suffered. For they loved not this present world; but Him Who died, and was raised again by God for us."¹ When Rufus and Zozimus received their crown of martyrdom is not known precisely, but it is supposed to have been about A.D. 116. The Church commemorates them on December 18th.

From Seleucia the prisoners sailed for Smyrna, where they arrived after a perilous and tedious voyage, and here Ignatius had the happiness of meeting his friend and fellow-disciple, Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. How must each have rejoiced to see the other so firm in the Faith,² and following the precepts of their teacher and

death, rather than present pleasure. These are not the acts of a dead man, or of one who is in his grave; but of One Who has arisen and lives. For how can we reconcile it to reason that all the Apostles whilst He lived, should be so weak from fear as to betray their Master, to leave Him and fly; but that when He was dead, not only Peter and Paul, but Ignatius, who had never seen Him, nor shared in His intercourse, should manifest such zeal for His Sake, as for Him to lay down life itself. Therefore, that all who dwell in Rome might learn these things by living actions, did God consent that this holy man should there be made perfect."

¹ Polycarp, Epist. to the Phil. ix.

² See Epist. of S. Ignat. to S. Polycarp.

spiritual Father S. John. We can imagine them recapitulating the holy words they were used to gather from his lips: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the Will of God, abideth for ever."¹ Would not S. Polycarp be ready to apply to his brother, thus hastening to meet his violent death, the Apostle's words: "Ye have an unction from the Holy Ghost."² And again: "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not."³ Who can ever have read the wondrous Book of the Revelations of S. John with such intensity of realization as these two Saints, who had sat at his feet and heard his loving voice, who had joyed over his entrance into that unspeakable bliss, on which he had been permitted to gaze for a moment, that he might strengthen therewith the hearts of all the faithful even unto this day? One hastening to join him there directly, the other foreseeing that ere long his turn must come, for there is reason to suppose that S. John addressed Polycarp, when he says to the Angel of the Church in Smyrna: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer . . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. ii. 10). How must they have loved to

¹ S. John ii. 15, 17.

² S. John ii. 20.

³ 1 S. John iii. 1.

dwell upon those glorious descriptions of the New Jerusalem ; the emerald throne, beneath its rainbow arch, the crystal sea, and the Tree of Life ; how must they have yearned to hear the new song, as the voice of many waters, and to be arrayed in the white robes promised to them who have come out of great tribulation, and have been washed in the Blood of the Lamb !

Surely we cannot wonder at the joyous, almost exulting tone in which S. Ignatius wrote from Smyrna of his approaching martyrdom. Yet his time there was not all spent in the indulgence of the joyful anticipations which he and Polycarp shared. Much and earnest care was bestowed not only upon his now orphaned Church, but upon the various other Churches that sent envoys to meet the venerable martyr, to bear to him their greetings, and in return carry back with them words of exhortation and encouragement.

Several Bishops came in person to receive a last farewell from S. Ignatius : amongst these were Onesimus, Bishop of Ephesus ; Damas, Bishop of Magnesia ; and Polybius, Bishop of Tralles. By Onesimus, S. Ignatius wrote to the Ephesians, thanking them for their love to him : “For hearing that I came bound from Syria, for the common Name, and Hope, trusting through your prayers to fight with beasts at Rome, that so by suffering, I may become indeed the disciple of Him Who gave Himself to God, an Offering and Sacrifice for us, ye hastened to see me. I

received, therefore, in the name of God, your whole multitude in Onesimus, who, by inexpressible love, is ours . . . Whom I beseech you, by Jesus Christ to love, and that you would all strive to be like unto him. And blessed be God, Who has granted unto you . . to enjoy such an excellent Bishop.”¹ The humility with which the saint speaks of himself is not to be overlooked, “Though I am bound for His Name,” he says, “I am not yet perfect in Christ Jesus. But now I begin to learn, and I speak to you as fellow disciples together with me. For I ought to have been stirred up by you, in Faith, in admonition, in patience, in long suffering.”²

S. Ignatius proceeds to enlarge upon the beauty of harmony in the Church : “For your presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the Bishop as the strings are to the harp. Therefore, in your concord and agreeing charity, Jesus Christ is sung, and every single person among you makes up the chorus ; that so being all consonant in love, and taking up the song of God, ye may in a perfect unity, with one voice, sing to the Father by Jesus Christ, to the end that He may both hear you, and perceive by your works, that ye are indeed the members of His Son. Wherefore it is profitable for you to live in an unblameable unity, that so ye may always have fellowship with God.”³

¹ Epist. to Eph. i.

² Ibid. iii.

³ Ibid. iv.

Speaking of certain who troubled the Church with their heresies, S. Ignatius says: "Pray also without ceasing for them, for there is hope of repentance in them, that they may attain unto God. Let them therefore, at least be instructed by your works, if they will be no other way. Be ye mild at their anger, humble at their boasting; to their blasphemies return your prayers; to their error, your firmness in the faith. When they are cruel, be ye gentle, not endeavouring to imitate their ways. Let us be their brethren in all kindness and moderation, but let us be followers of the Lord." And a little further: "It is better for a man to hold his peace and not to lie, than to say he is a Christian and lie. It is good to teach, if what he says he does likewise. . . . He that possesses the Word of Jesus, is truly able to hear His very silence, that he may be perfect, and both do according to what He speaks, and be known by those things of which He is silent. There is nothing hid from God, but even our secrets are nigh unto Him. Let us, therefore, do all things as becomes those who have God dwelling in them, that we may be His temple, and He may be our God."¹

In S. Ignatius's Epistle to the Magnesians, he presses upon them the great need of unity, with all the earnestness natural to the disciple of him who heard from the Saviour's Own Lips

¹ Epist. Eph. x. 15.

those solemn words : “I am the Door . . . he that entereth not by the Door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.”¹

Ignatius says : “As, therefore, the Lord did nothing without the Father, being united to Him, neither by Himself nor yet by His Apostles, so neither do ye do anything without your Bishops and presbyters; neither endeavour to let anything appear rational to yourselves apart, but being come together into the same place, have one common prayer, one supplication, one mind, one hope, in charity and in joy undefiled. There is One Lord Jesus Christ, than Whom nothing is better. Wherefore, come ye all together as unto one Temple of God, as to One Altar, as to One Jesus Christ, Who proceeded from the Father, and exists in One, and is returned to One . . . Farewell, and be ye strengthened in the concord of God, enjoying His inseparable Spirit, which is Jesus Christ.”²

It was in the same spirit that the Saint addressed the Trallians, by their Bishop Polybius, charging them, by their Great Master, to “use none but Christian nourishment, abstaining from pasture which is of another kind—I mean heresy.”³ And he goes on to compare heretics to those who mingle deadly poison with delicious

¹ S. John. x.

² Epist. to Magnesians.

³ Epist. to Trallians.

wine, and give it to the unwary, who unconsciously "does with the treacherous pleasure sweetly drink in his own death."

In this letter S. Ignatius alludes to his approaching martyrdom in very striking language, showing that though he triumphed in being permitted to testify to the world his love for the faith, and to seal that faith with his blood, yet that self had no part in his triumph; but he fulfilled the Apostolic precept: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."¹

These are his words: "I refrain myself, lest I should perish in my boasting. For now ought I the more to fear, and not hearken to those that would puff me up. For they that speak to me in my praise, chasten me.² For I indeed desire to suffer, but I cannot tell whether I am worthy so to do. And this desire, though to others it does not appear, yet to myself it is for that very reason the more violent. I have need therefore of moderation, by which the prince of this world is destroyed."³

On all sides, the venerable saint met with so much love, so much respect and devotion, that he began to fear lest the Christians in Rome

¹ 1 Cor. i. 31.

² "Pray we our Lord, one pang to send,
Of deep, remorseful fear
For every smile of partial friend—
Praise be our penance here."

³ Epist. Trall. iv.

should take any strong measures to hinder his martyrdom and their great loss. Accordingly, before leaving Smyrna, S. Ignatius wrote to the Romans, that which we may consider as the most important of his epistles. It is, accordingly, given entire :—

“ Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church which has obtained mercy from the Majesty of the Most High Father, and His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ, beloved and illuminated through the Will of Him Who willeth all things which are according to the Love of Jesus Christ our God—which also presides in the place of the region of the Romans, and which I salute in the Name of Jesus Christ, as being united both in flesh and spirit, to all His Commands, and filled with the Grace of God—all joy in Jesus Christ our God.

“ Forasmuch as I have at last obtained through my prayers to God to see your faces, which I much desired to do, being bound in Christ Jesus, I hope ere long to salute you, if it shall be the Will of God to grant me to attain unto the end I long for. For the beginning is well disposed, if I shall but have grace, without hindrance, to receive that which is appointed for me. But I fear your love, lest it do me an injury. For it is easy for you to do what you please, but it will be hard for me to attain unto God, if you spare me.

“ But I would not that ye should please men,

but God, Whom also ye do please. For neither shall I ever hereafter have such an opportunity of going unto God, nor will you, if ye shall now be silent, ever be intituled to a better work. For if you shall be silent in my behalf, I shall be made partaker of God ; but if you shall love my body, I shall have my course again to run. Wherefore, ye cannot do me a greater kindness, than to suffer me to be sacrificed unto God, now that the altar is already prepared ; that when ye shall be gathered together in love, ye may give thanks to the Father through Christ Jesus, that He has vouchsafed to bring a Bishop of Syria unto you, being called from the East unto the West. For it is good for me to set from the world unto God, that I may rise again unto Him.

“ Ye have never envied any one; ye have taught others ; I would, therefore, that ye should now do those things yourselves, which in your instructions you have prescribed to others. Only pray for me, that God would give me both inward and outward strength, that I may not only say, but will ; nor be only called a Christian, but be found one. For if I shall be found a Christian, I may then be deservedly called one, and be thought faithful, when I shall no longer appear to the world. Nothing that is seen is eternal. . . . A Christian is not a work of opinion, but of greatness of mind, especially when he is hated by the world.

"I write to the churches, and signify to them all that I am willing to die for God, unless you hinder me. I beseech you that you show not an unseasonable good will towards me. Suffer me to be food to the wild beasts, by whom I shall attain unto God. For I am the wheat of God, and I shall be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. Rather encourage the beasts, that they may become my sepulchre, and may leave nothing of my body, that being dead I may not be troublesome to any. Then shall I be truly the disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world shall not see so much as my body. Pray therefore, unto Christ for me, that by these instruments I may be made the sacrifice of God. I do not as Peter and Paul, command you; they were Apostles, I a condemned man; they were free, but I am even to this day a servant.¹ But if I shall suffer, I shall then become the freedman of Jesus Christ, and shall rise free. And now being in bonds, I learn not to desire anything.

"From Syria even unto Rome, I fight with beasts both by sea and land, both night and day; being bound unto ten leopards, that is to say to such a band of soldiers, who though treated with all manner of kindness, are the worse for it. But I am the more instructed by their injuries,

¹ Was not this holy Ignatius truly one of those of whom it is written: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted?"

yet am I not therefore justified. May I enjoy the wild beasts that are prepared for me, which also I wish may exercise all their fierceness upon me, whom for that end I will encourage, that they may be sure to devour me, and not serve me as they have done some, whom out of fear they have not touched. But and if they will not do it willingly, I will provoke them to it. Pardon me in this matter, I know what is profitable for me. Now I begin to be a disciple, nor shall anything move me, whether visible or invisible, that I may attain to Christ Jesus. Let fire and the cross, let the companies of wild beasts, let breakings of bones, and tearings of members, let the shattering in pieces of the whole body, and all the wicked torments of the devil, come upon me, only let me enjoy Jesus Christ.

“All the ends of the world, and the kingdoms of it, will profit me nothing. I would rather die for Jesus Christ, than rule to the utmost ends of the earth. Him I seek Who died for us, Him I desire Who rose again for us. This is the gain that is laid up for me. Pardon me my brethren, ye shall not hinder me from living.¹ Nor, seeing I desire to go to God, may you separate me from Him, for the sake of this

¹ S. Ignatius probably means this in the sense that S. Paul speaks of himself and his fellow Apostles as “dying, and behold we live” (2 Cor. vi. 9), and S. Peter, “that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” (1 S. Peter iv. 6.)

world, nor seduce me by any of the desires of it. Suffer me to enter into pure light,¹ where being come, I shall be indeed the servant of God. Permit me to imitate the Passion of my God; if any one has Him within himself, let him consider what I desire, and let him have compassion on me, as knowing how I am straitened.

“The prince of this world would fain carry me away,² and corrupt my resolution towards my God. Let none of you therefore, help him; rather do ye join with me, that is with God. Do not speak with Jesus Christ, and yet covet the world. Let not any envy dwell with you, no not though I myself, when I shall be come unto you, should exhort you to it; yet do not you hearken to me, but rather believe what I now write to you.³ For though I am alive at the writing this, yet my desire is to die. My love is crucified, and the fire that is within me

¹ As his father in Christ had written: “God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. . . . If we walk in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 S. John i. 5-7.).

² Compare S. John xiv. 30, and Eph. vi. 11.

³ S. Ignatius would seem to mean by this, that should he be weakened and overcome by suffering and torture, so as to shrink back from the final struggle, that the brethren should not heed that, but rather consider what he now wrote in full vigour of mind, as being conclusive and authoritative. According to the Greek historians, before leaving Antioch, S. Ignatius had been cruelly tortured by the command of Trajan. See Cave’s Life of S. Ignatius.

does not desire any water, but being alive and springing within me, says, Come to the Father.¹ I take no pleasure in the food of corruption, nor in the pleasures of this life. I desire the Bread of God, which is the Flesh of Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, and the Drink that I long for is His Blood, which is Incorruptible Love.

“I have no desire to live any longer after the manner of men, neither shall I, if you consent. Be ye therefore, willing that ye yourselves also, may be pleasing to God. I exhort you in a few words, I pray you believe me. Jesus Christ will show you that I speak truly. My mouth is without deceit, and the Father hath truly spoken by it. Pray therefore for me, that I may accomplish what I desire. I have not written unto you after the flesh, but according to the Will of God. If I suffer, ye have loved me; but if I shall be rejected, ye have hated me.

“Remember in your prayers the Church of Syria, which now enjoys God for its Shepherd, instead of me;² let Jesus Christ only oversee it,

¹ “Where are those saints, think we? There where it is well. What seekest thou more? Thou knowest not the place, but think on their desert. Wherever they are, they are with God. The souls of the just are in the Hand of God.”—S. Aug. Serm. 298.

² S. Chrysostom says: “The devil, malicious as he is, and cunning to contrive such evil devices, expected that if he could take away the shepherds, it would be easy for him to scatter the sheep. But He Who entangles the crafty in their wickedness, willing to show them that it is

and your charity. But I am even ashamed to be reckoned as one of them,¹ for neither am I worthy, being the least among them, and as one born out of due season. But through Mercy I have obtained to be somebody, if I shall get unto God. My spirit salutes you, and the charity of the Churches that have received

not in their own strength that men govern His Churches, but that it is He Himself, Who is everywhere the Shepherd of those who trust in Him, consented to this being done, that the devil, when he saw that godliness failed not from the loss, and that the word of preaching was not quenched, but rather increasing, he and all who were his ministers in these matters might learn, that our strength is not of man; but that the foundation of our doctrine has its root above in Heaven, and that it is God Who everywhere guides the Churches, and that he who fights against God can never be victorious."—Hom. in Ignat.

This deep and holy truth, that, where human help and guidance is by God's Will removed, its want is abundantly supplied by Himself, has been applied very beautifully to individual necessities. "Well may we say, 'I need not creatures, God alone sufficeth me,' if we can find no fitting guide, as will sometimes happen. Let the soul take comfort; be she faithful to God, she will find all in Him. Trust in God alone ought to give peace, if a guide quitte or parteth from us. Oh what sweetness to know that God never parteth! If He Who helped thee through man, willeth to become thy Teacher, and Himself instruct thee, what wrong doth He to thee?"

"Untaught by man, they are far more taught by Him, the promised, the only Teacher, Who also Alone teacheth in all through whom He teacheth."

¹ S. Ignatius here alludes to the shepherds, or Apostles of the Churches.

me in the Name of Jesus Christ, not as a passenger only. For even they that were not near to me in the way, have gone before me to the next city to meet me.

“ These things I write unto you from Smyrna, by the most worthy of the Church of Ephesus. There is now with me, together with many others, Crocus, most beloved of me; as for those which are come from Syria, and are gone before me to Rome, to the Glory of God, I suppose you are not ignorant of them. Ye shall therefore signify to them that I draw near, for they are all worthy both of God, and of you, whom it is fit that you refresh in all things. This have I written to you, the day before the 9th of the calends of September. Be strong unto the end, in the patience of Jesus Christ.”

Rex gloriose Martyrum,
Corona confitentium,
Qui respuentes terrea
Perducis ad cœlestia:
Aurem benignam protinus
Intende nostris vocibus:
Trophœa sacra pangimus:
Ignosce quod delinquimus.
Tu vincis inter Martyres,
Parcisque Confessoribus;
Tu vince nostra crimina,
Largitor indulgentiæ.
Deo Patri sit gloria,
Eiusque soli Filio,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,
Nunc, et per omne sœculum.

Amen.

CHAPTER II.

" Ye han forsooth ydon a gret bataille ;
Your couris is don, your faith hath you conserved ;
Goth to the croune of lif that may not faille ;
The rightful Juge, which that ye han served,
Shal yeve it you, as ye han it deserved."

Chaucer.

S. IGNATIUS LEAVES SMYRNA—HALTS AT TROAS—MARTYRDOM OF S. SIMEON OF JERUSALEM—S. IGNATIUS WRITES TO THE PHILADELPHIANS—TO THE SMYRNEANS—TO S. POLYCARP—SAILS TO NEAPOLIS—JOURNEY TO PHILIPPI—AND EPIDAMNUM—SAILS TO PUTEOLI—AND OSTIA WHERE THE BRETHREN MEET HIM—HIS LAST ADDRESS TO THEM—HIS MARTYRDOM—APPEARS IN A VISION TO HIS DISCIPLES—S. CHRYSOSTOM'S SERMON ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF S. IGNATIUS' MARTYRDOM.

SHORTLY after the letter to the Romans was written, the guard under whose care S. Ignatius was placed left Smyrna; and the holy man having taken leave of his brother Polycarp, ere long to be re-united beyond all fear of separation or persecution, sailed for Troas, where again a halt was made. Here S. Ignatius had the happiness of hearing that the persecution at Antioch had ceased, and that his flock had rest. According to S. Chrysostom, this city had specially suffered, not only in her Bishop, but

generally.¹ S. Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem, was martyred shortly before S. Ignatius,² and possibly he received this (to him) inspiriting intelligence at Troas. This Bishop had reached the venerable age of one hundred and twenty years, when he suffered cruel torments during several days, and finally was crucified.³

As at Smyrna, so at Troas, messengers came from different Churches to testify their love and veneration for the aged martyr, and once more he addressed letters to confirm and strengthen them in the Faith for which he was about to die. In that to the Philadelphians his usual hearty longings for internal unity, and submission on the part of the people to their spiritual rulers, together with his conviction that those rightly ordained are divinely appointed, are strongly put forth. In his opening salutation he says:

¹ "A grievous war had then broken out against the Church, and, as if some tremendous tyrannical power was then master of the land, men were torn from the midst of the place of public assembly, accused of nothing wrong, but because they had abandoned error and followed after godliness; because they had deserted the worship of the demons; because they had known the true God, and adored Him, and His Only Begotten Son. So the men, whom they ought to have crowned, and wondered at, and honoured, these they punished; and all who had received the Faith were surrounded by ten thousand terrors, but much more those who presided over the Church."—S. Chrysostom, Homil. in Ignat.

² Tillmont, Vie de S. Simeon.

³ Tillmont.

"Especially if they are at unity with the Bishop and presbyters who are with him, and the deacons appointed according to the Mind of Jesus Christ, whom He has settled according to His Own Will, in all firmness, by His Holy Spirit."¹

His portrait of the Bishop of the Philadelphians is such as might well have been given of himself:
"Which Bishop I know, obtained that great ministry among you, not of himself, neither by men, nor out of vain glory, but by the Love of God the Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whose moderation I admire, who by his silence is able to do more than others with all their vain talk. For he is fitted to the command, as the harp to its strings. Wherefore my soul esteems his mind towards God most happy, knowing it to be fruitful in all virtue, and perfect, full of constancy, free from passion, and according to all the moderation of the Living God. Wherefore, as becomes the children both of the light and of truth, flee divisions and false doctrines; but where your Shepherd is, there do ye as sheep follow him. . . . Abstain, therefore, from those evil herbs which Jesus Christ does not dress, because such are not the plantation of the Father.² . . . For as many as are of God, and of Jesus Christ, are also with their Bishop. And as many as shall with repentance return

¹ Epist. to Phil.

² "Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (S. John xv. 2.)

into the unity of the Church, even these shall also be the servants of God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ. Be not deceived, brethren, if any one follow him that makes a schism in the Church, he shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. If any one walk after any other opinion, he agrees not with the Passion of Christ. Wherefore let it be your endeavour to partake all of the same holy Eucharist. For there is but One Flesh of our Jesus Christ, and one Cup in the unity of His Blood; one Altar, as also there is one Bishop, together with his presbytery, and the deacons my fellow-servants. That so, whatsoever ye do, ye may do it according to the Will of God.'"¹

The more than wonted fervency with which S. Ignatius presses this point of unity upon the Philadelphians, is to be accounted for by a Judaizing spirit having arisen within that Church, which had misled some. The guilty ones had apparently shrunk back from the rebuke they expected and merited at the hands of the Bishop of Antioch, for he says: "Although some would have deceived me according to the flesh, yet the Spirit, being from God, is not deceived."² Finding this, the Philadelphians imagined that he had penetrated to the truth through supernatural aid, which he entirely disclaims, saying that as one endowed with the

¹ Epist. to Phil.

² Ibid. vii.

Spirit (as are all lawfully-ordained priests), he spoke the truth “as a man composed to unity; for where there is division and wrath, God dwelleth not. But the Lord forgives all that repent, if they return to the Unity of God, and to the counsel of the Bishop.”¹

To the Church of Smyrna, which he had just left, S. Ignatius likewise addressed an epistle,² styling it “filled with faith and charity, wanting in no gift, most worthy of God, and fruitful in saints.” He thanks them for their love to him, so lately shown, saying: “Ye have refreshed me in all things, so shall Christ Jesus you. Ye have loved me both when I was present with you, and now being absent, ye cease not to do so. May God be your reward Nor shall anything that you have done be lost to you. My soul be for yours, and my bonds, which ye have not despised, nor been ashamed of. Wherefore, neither shall Jesus Christ, our perfect Faith, be ashamed of you.”³

S. Ignatius requests both of these Churches to send messengers to Antioch to comfort that Church, and rejoice with her in her deliverance from persecution.

¹ Epist. to Phil. viii.

² Of this epistle, and that addressed to himself, S. Polycarp says that they are highly profitable, “for they treat of faith and patience, and of all things that pertain to edification in the Lord Jesus.”—Polycarp, Epist. ad Phil. xiii.

³ Epist. to Smyrna, ix. x.

The last words that Theophorus, the Bearer of God, wrote, are addressed to S. Polycarp, his friend and brother. The letter is worthy of being written by one saintly martyr to another :

“ Ignatius who is called Theophorus, to Polycarp, Bishop of the Church which is at Smyrna, their overseer, but rather himself overlooked by God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,—all happiness.

“ Having known that thy mind towards God is fixed as it were upon an immovable Rock, I exceedingly give thanks, that I have been thought worthy to behold thy blessed face, in which may I always rejoice in God. Wherefore, I beseech thee by the Grace of God, with Which thou art clothed, to press forward in thy course, and to exhort all others that they may be saved. Maintain thy place, with all care both of flesh and spirit.¹ Make it thy endeavour to preserve unity, than which nothing is better. Bear with all men, even as the Lord with thee. Support all in love, as also thou dost. Pray without ceasing, ask more understanding than what thou already hast. Be watchful, having thy spirit always awake. Speak to every one according as God shall enable thee. Bear the infirmities of

¹ These words show that S. Ignatius did not consider that rashly and uncalled for to rush upon martyrdom was acceptable to God, but quite distinct from rejoicing in it and refusing to evade it, when offered by God's Hand.

all, as a perfect combatant. Where the labour is great, the gain is the more.

“ If thou shalt love the good disciples, what thank is it? But rather do thou subject to thee those that are mischievous, in meekness. Every wound is not healed with the same plaster; if the accessions of the disease be vehement, mollify them with soft remedies. Be in all things wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove. For this cause thou art composed of flesh and spirit, that thou mayst mollify those things that appear before thy face; and as for those that are not seen, pray to God that He would reveal them unto thee, that so thou mayst be wanting in nothing, but mayst abound in every good gift. The times demand thee, as the pilots the winds, and he that is tossed in a tempest the haven where he would be, that so thou mayst attain unto God. Be sober, as the combatant of God; the crown proposed to thee is immortality, and eternal life, concerning which thou art also fully persuaded. I will be thy surety in all things, and my bonds, which thou hast loved.

“ Let not those that seem worthy of credit, but teach other doctrines, disturb thee. Stand firm, and immoveable, as an anvil when it is beaten upon. It is the part of a brave combatant, to be wounded, and yet to conquer. But especially we ought to endure all things for God’s Sake, that He may bear with us.

Be every day better than other ; consider the times, and expect Him, Who is Above all times, Eternal, Invisible, though for our sakes made Visible ; Impalpable and Impassable, yet for us subjected to sufferings, enduring all manner of ways for our salvation.”¹

How fully he to whom these words were addressed acted up to their spirit we shall see hereafter.

S. Ignatius sends special messages of counsel to the various classes in the Church of Smyrna; to all he says: “Let none of you be found a deserter, but let your Baptism remain as your arms, your Faith as your helmet, your Charity as your spear, your Patience as your whole armour. Be long-suffering towards each other in meekness, as God is towards you.”²

More he would probably have written, but that his keepers summoned him to resume his journey, not again to stop till they had reached the scene of his death. This he himself says in his letter to S. Polycarp: “I must suddenly sail from Troas to Neapolis; for so is the command of those to whose pleasure I am subject.”³

Arriving at Neapolis (a sea-port in Macedonia), they proceeded to Philippi, where the saint met with an affectionate reception from the Church, and was conducted on his journey by the brethren.⁴

¹ Epist. to S. Polycarp. ² Ibid. vi. ³ Ibid. viii.

⁴ “ . . . Ye received the images of a true love, and accompanied, as it behoved you, those who were in bonds,

At Epidamnum, they again took ship, and made for Puteoli, where they landed, and whence S. Ignatius ardently desired to proceed on foot to Rome, that he might continue to trace the steps of his holy predecessor, S. Paul.¹ The wind, however, being favourable to a sea voyage, this was not permitted him; delay being unwelcome to the guard, inasmuch as the public games, in the course of which the saint was to suffer, were approaching their close. He was willing to make what speed they would himself, for the lions had no terrors for him; but his companions were most reluctant to progress, feeling that every step shortened the brief space in which they were yet to retain the bodily presence of their holy father.² So they hastened on from Ostia, where they landed, and where they were met by a band of Christian men from Rome, who were divided between fear and joy.³ For though they rejoiced that they were permitted to see and hearken to so holy a man as Theophorus, yet their hearts were heavy within them when they remembered that his presence was granted to them but for a moment, and that he had come amongst them but to die.⁴ So they journeyed

becoming saints, which are the crowns of such as are truly chosen by God and our Lord."—S. Polycarp, Epist. to Phil.

¹ Acts xvi. 11, 12; and xxviii. 13-16. Act. Ignatius, x.

² Act. Ignatius, xi.

³ Ibid. xii.

⁴ "Dieu le permettait pour exercer l'Eglise, non pour l'affaiblir."—Tillemont.

on towards Rome, crossing the Campagna by the Via Ostiensis, and hanging on every word which fell from those saintly lips, so soon to be hushed for ever. In vain S. Ignatius strove to calm their grief, and bid them be content that he should glorify God as He Himself had appointed; each word he spoke did but the more show them how great a loss they were about to experience; and by the time they reached the city the more vehement amongst the brethren resolved to appeal to the people, and make one last effort to save the life of so excellent a man. But he, finding what was their intention, gathered them all around him, and tenderly looking upon them as upon his children, prepared to address them once more. Were they so unwilling to give him up to God? Had they so little love for him their father, that they would keep him back from so great a prize as the crown of martyrdom? Not so; they would not hinder him now that the victory was all but won, the haven within sight. The solemn eloquence of the heart which poured from his lips conquered, and the brethren yielded. Then kneeling down on the ground, all around him kneeling too, the grey-headed saint offered up a fervent prayer to God, in Whose Presence he hoped ere many hours had passed, to be;¹ beseeching Him of His Mercy to bless His

¹ “... Il suo voler più nel Voler s’infiamma
Del suo Signor, come favilla in fiamma.”

persecuted Church, and in His Own good time to give her rest and peace, and that He would bind together the hearts of His children in the Spirit of Love and Unity. Then rising up, he submitted to the impatient soldiers, and was conducted to the spot where he was to suffer.

It was one of the greatest days of the saturnalia, and the vast Colosseum was crowded even beyond its wont with spectators. The gladiators' bloody work was over, and the arena left bare and vacant ; the saint was led within it ; there he stood calm and fearless, all the vast multitude around centring their gaze on that solitary figure, which neither moved nor faltered, though the roaring of the lions might have appalled the stoutest heart. That centre spot is now marked by a cross ; but before it was raised, the thirsty ground drank the blood of many a servant of the Crucified One.

At last two fierce lions were let loose, and ere many seconds could pass, S. Ignatius' prayer was granted, and he was admitted to share the joys of Heaven. His wish that no remains might be left, but that he might find his death and sepulchre all in one,¹ was to a great extent fulfilled, for only a few bones were found by his bereaved brethren, who gathered them up "as an inestimable treasure left to the Church, by the grace which was in the martyr."²

¹ Epist. to Romans iv.

² Act. Ignatius, xii.

His companions who wrote the narration of these things, thus conclude: "Now these things were done the 18th of the calends of January (that is, the 20th day of Dec.),¹ Sura and Syncarius being the second time consuls of the Romans; of which we ourselves were eye-witnesses; and being, the night following, watching with tears in the house, praying to God, on our bended knees, that He would give us, weak men, some assurance of what had been before done, it happened that, falling into a slumber; some of us on the sudden saw the blessed Ignatius standing by us and embracing us; others beheld the blessed martyr praying for us; others, as it were, dropping with sweat, as if he were just come from his great labour, and standing by the Lord. Which, when we saw, being filled with joy, and comparing the visions of our dreams with one another, we glorified God, the Giver of all good things, and being assured of the blessedness of the Saint, we have made known unto you both the day and the time, that being assembled together according to the time of his martyrdom, we may communicate with the combatant and most valiant martyr of Christ, who trod under foot the devil, and perfected the course he had piously desired, in Christ Jesus, our Lord: By Whom, and with Whom, all glory and power be to the

¹ A.D. 107.

Father with the Blessed Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen."¹

Accordingly, the Greek Church adheres to the 20th of Dec. as the day on which to thank Almighty God for having set before His people so noble an example of suffering unto death for that Faith which was dearer to him than all else, and to ask for grace and strength to love his and our Master with as strong a love!

S. Ignatius' bones were carefully removed to the city where he had dwelt a nursing Father of the Church; and year by year as the anniversary of his martyrdom came round, those who had succeeded him in the care of the people, were wont to recall to their recollection, as an incitement to greater holiness, the history of their martyred Bishop, offering humble thanks to God for His Goodness, in giving them such an example of Faith and stedfastness. We are taught how to value thereby one who was himself a true and devoted servant of S. Ignatius' Master, and who also wears the crown of martyrdom, S. Chrysostom. The Golden Lips were opened eloquently on a subject so congenial as this "blessed and noble martyr;" and we cannot better conclude the life of S. Ignatius, than with some passages from a sermon of S. Chrysostom's, preached on his anniversary:

"The opportunity is favourable for narrating

¹ Act. Ignatius, xiv.

the acts of this blessed one, but our thoughts are disturbed and troubled, uncertain which to speak of first, so dense a flood of topics for praise flows in upon us on every side; as one who should enter a garden, and beholding many roses, and lilies, and violets, and other lovely flowers, varied and diverse, would be in doubt which to look at first, and which next, of objects, each of which in itself claims his observation. So we, when we enter into the spiritual garden of Ignatius' acts, and see, not spring flowers, but the varied and diverse fruits of the Spirit Itself in his soul, are perplexed, and at a loss from which point to begin our discourse. . . . For consider: he presided over the Church in our city nobly, and with all the perfection which Christ requires. For that which He defined as the attainment and rule of the episcopal office, this did Ignatius in his actions manifest. He heard Christ say that the good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, and with all the manliness he gave up his for his flock. . . . And a time came requiring a soul which could rise above all present things, and live with a Divine love, and esteem the things unseen more highly than the things seen; and then he put off the flesh with as much contentedness as one might put off a garment.

“ Which then shall we first speak of? the apostolic doctrine which he everywhere set forth? or his contempt of the present life?

or the perfectness of the excellence with which he conducted and governed the Church ? Of whom shall we first make mention—of the Martyr ? the Bishop ? or the Apostle ? for three-fold is the crown which the Grace of the Spirit wove and bound around his holy brow ; nay, rather manifold ; for let each of these be carefully unwound, and we shall find other crowns growing on our sight."

After mentioning his having received the laying-on of hands from the Apostles themselves, S. Chrysostom reminds the people what S. Paul required of a Bishop (and what one Apostle required, all would ; for "as in a lyre the strings indeed are different, but the harmony is one, so in the band of the Apostles the form was different, but the doctrine was one—for the workman was one, the Holy Spirit Who moved their hearts "); and he observes that they would not have committed so solemn a trust to one not answering to such a requisition, continuing : "Confidently then do I affirm, that the blessed Ignatius had stamped the exact impression of all these virtues upon his own soul, and was blameless,¹ not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate. . . . Consider the time when this office was committed to his

¹ Titus i. 7-9.

hands. It was not the same thing to govern the Church then as it is now, as it is not the same thing to travel along a beaten path, well trodden by many wayfarers, as for the first time to trace out the path which is to be made, beset by dangers manifold." Then, after enumerating the perils and difficulties which abounded, and under which even the chosen Apostles had groaned, S. Chrysostom proceeds :—" As then we admire the helmsman, not when the sea is calm, and the ship, urged on by favouring winds, bears those who are on board in safety ; but if, though the sea rage, and its waves arise, the crew is in uproar, whilst from within and from without the storm fiercely assails those on board, he still is able to guide the ship aright in all safety ; so ought we to be far more struck by and to admire those to whose hands the Church was then committed, than those who govern it now ;¹ then, when the war was fierce from without and from within, when the plant of Faith was

¹ S. Chrysostom might say this of himself, but when we look back upon his own life of self-devotion, his unwearied energy and patience as a shepherd and bishop of souls, his wonderful command of the hearts of his people, and the wisdom and ability with which he ruled them—yet further, the meekness and long-suffering with which he endured persecution, so that it has been said that from his exile's cell at Cucusus he governed the Christian world, and finally, his lingering martyr's death, we can hardly give to his memory less love and reverence than to that of his predecessor, S. Ignatius.

yet tender, and needing much care, when, like a new-born babe, the multitude of the Church needed much watchfulness, and great wisdom in those who should undertake to nurse it."

We have already quoted S. Chrysostom's words respecting S. Ignatius' journey to Rome, and how on his way he strengthened all the faithful. He continues:—"Not without the walls, in a dungeon, or in the prison of the courts of justice, or in a corner, did he suffer the sentence pronounced against him; but in the midst of the theatre, whilst all the city sat around as spectators, did he endure martyrdom from wild beasts let loose against him, that before the eyes of all men he might raise his trophy over the devil, and make all the spectators envious of his contest, dying, as he did, not only with nobleness, but with pleasure. For it was not as one who was about to be torn away from life, but as one who was called to a better and more spiritual life, that he looked upon the wild beasts with so much gladness. . . . He esteemed their jaws as much less savage than the tyrant's tongue, and with reason; for that called him to hell, but their jaws were his passport to a Kingdom."

S. POLYCARP,
BISHOP AND MARTYR.

“ Angel of Smyrna, child of John,
And friend of that beloved one,
Beloved of Him Whose Love is life;
How didst thou, left to worldly strife,
Bear with thee, as with holiest trance,
The music of that countenance,
Which spoke the wisdom of the skies
And his own Master’s charities ?
Again that voice from Patmos came
With auguries of thy couch of flame,
And bore his Saviour’s praise to thee,
Whose praise is Immortality,—
‘ To death be faithful Me to own,
And I will to thee life’s never-fading crown.’ ”

The Cathedral.



S. POLYCARP,

BISHOP AND MARTYR.

Oh Thou that sitt'st in heaven and see'st
My deeds without, my thoughts within,
Be Thou my Prince, be Thou my Priest,
Command my soul, and cure my sin :
How bitter my afflictions be
I care not, so I rise to Thee."

John Quarles, 1654.

THE EMPEROR HADRIAN—CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS; ARISTIDES
AND QUADRATUS—ANTONINUS PIUS—MARCUS AURELIUS—
EARLY HISTORY OF S. POLYCARP—ORDAINED DEACON—AP-
POINTED BISHOP OF SMYRNA—S. IGNATIUS' LETTER TO
HIM—HE WRITES TO THE PHILIPPIANS—S. IRENÆUS HIS
DISCIPLE—QUARTO-DECIMAN CONTROVERSY—S. POLYCARP
GOES TO ROME—ANICETUS, BISHOP OF ROME—HERESY
OF MARCIAN.

WHEN once the wild beast of the forest has
tasted the life-blood of its prey, it scorns the
less savage nourishment which has hitherto sus-
tained it; and henceforth blood alone can satisfy
it. So when the heathen had begun to shed the
blood of Christians, their bitter rage and fury
might be lulled for a time, but never wholly

quelled. The persecution at times rose to a madder, more devastating height, carrying all before it, but even under those Emperors least blood-thirsty by nature, we see the crown of martyrdom won by many a Christian, then unknown and contemptible, now remembered with a veneration far greater than that enjoyed by their imperial persecutors.

Trajan, under whom S. Ignatius died, was succeeded by Hadrian, his kinsman, whose character seemed to be composed of inconsistencies and paradoxes; so that after his death the senate hesitated whether to bestow upon his memory divine honours, or to pronounce him a tyrant, and the former course was only conceded to the request of his successor. The empire prospered under Hadrian's rule; active and energetic, he superintended all his foreign governments in person. His life has been described as "a perpetual journey." Heeding neither fatigue nor hardship, but sharing the lot of his soldiers, the Emperor was to be found successively in Britain, in Gaul, Greece, Syria, Africa, and Egypt, gratifying, as he travelled, his "ruling passions, curiosity, and vanity."¹ His was that busy, restless spirit of inquiry, which always was ready to "tell or hear some new thing."² All religions seem to have been

¹ Gibbon, chap. iii. "He was by turns an excellent prince, a ridiculous sophist, and a jealous tyrant."

² Acts xvii. 21.

seen by him from a philosophic and political point of view. The established religion was the one which, for the time being, excited all his external reverence; at Rome he officiated with the utmost solemnity, as Supreme Pontiff; in the East he abandoned himself to the study of astrology and magic; at Athens he restored the temple of Jupiter Olympus; and the lover of classic art is familiar with the exquisite statues which he multiplied of the deified Antinous. Under such a man Christianity was not likely either to pass by unnoticed, or when considered, to meet with gentle treatment; its whole system was too lowly, too little adorned by gorgeous and impressive rites, to win the approval of Hadrian. He did not command a general and fierce persecution—but the laws of Trajan remained unrepealed, and the readiness to put the Christians to the torture, which we find even in the gentle Pliny, was in no way repressed or lessened. S. Jerome speaks of their sufferings under this Emperor, as “a most grievous and heavy persecution,” and the names of many martyrs are transmitted to us, but usually without any considerable or authentic particulars. How little Hadrian, with all his penetration, really understood the spirit of the persecuted Faith, may be gathered from his letter to the Consul Servianus, in which (having recently returned from Egypt) he says, “I am now, my dear Servianus, become acquainted

with that Egypt which you prize so highly. I have found the people vain, feeble, and shifting with every breath of popular rumour. Those who worship Serapis are Christians, and those who call themselves Christian bishops are worshippers of Serapis. There is no ruler of a Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no Christian bishop, who is not an astrologer, an interpreter of prodigies, an anointer. The Patriarch himself, when he comes to Egypt, is compelled by one party to worship Serapis, by the other Christ."

At this time the Church at Athens was most excellently governed by Quadratus, a most learned and pious Bishop. Hadrian spent a whole winter in Athens, during which time he was presented with addresses, containing an apology, or defence of the Christians, by Aristides, a Christian philosopher, and also by Quadratus; of which latter writing Eusebius says, that it gives evident proof both of Quadratus' understanding, and of his apostolic faith.¹

It is probable that this appeal to Hadrian's liberality of feeling, may have had some influence in dictating his reply to an Asiatic consul,² who inquired of the Emperor how he was to act, when, as not unfrequently happened,

¹ Euseb. book iv. chap. iii. S. Jerome calls this a valuable work, full of powerful arguments, of the light of Faith, and worthy of a disciple of the Apostles.

² Mosheim, book i. 2.

a burst of popular fury called for vengeance upon the Christians.

To Minucius Fundanus :—

“ I have received an epistle, written to me by the most illustrious Serenius Granianus, whom you have succeeded. I do not wish that the matter should be passed by without examination, so that these men may neither be harassed needlessly, nor opportunity of malicious proceedings be offered to informers. If therefore the provincials can clearly evince their charges against the Christians, so as to answer before the public tribunal, let them pursue this course only, but not by mere petitions and mere outcries against the Christians. For it is far more proper, if any one should bring an accusation, that you should examine it. If any one, therefore, bring an accusation, and can show that they have done anything contrary to the laws, determine it thus according to the heinousness of the crime; and if any one should propose this out of spite and malice, investigate it according to its criminality, and see to it that you inflict the punishment.”¹

From this time Hadrian does not appear to have encouraged religious persecution; it is even said that he proposed to admit the God of the new sect—Christ—among his heathen deities, and proposed erecting a temple to His

¹ Euseb. iv. 9.

Name,¹ but was dissuaded, an oracle having declared that if he did so, the temples would be deserted, and all men would become Christians. Of Quadratus, who had so ably defended the Faith, little is known, except that he died a martyr's death towards the conclusion of Hadrian's reign.²

Under Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius, the Christians had more rest, yet they suffered for some time severely under the unrepealed laws of his predecessors; his disposition was gentle and mild, and in politics the tranquillity of his reign formed a striking contrast to the energetic and restless life Hadrian had led. Antoninus Pius never went farther from Rome than to his villa.³

Less indulgence was to be expected under the rule of the stern philosopher Marcus Aurelius, the worthy disciple of Zeno's school. His philosophic virtue and indifference to the follies and pleasures of the world, may be admired, but they contrast unfavourably with the nobler virtue, and renunciation of such follies and pleasures which we find displayed in the Christians. Gibbon says that Marcus Aurelius was "just and beneficent to all mankind." It is hard to reconcile this with the long martyrologies of his reign, and

¹ We may learn how to estimate this tribute, by recollecting that Hadrian dedicated many temples to Antinous, the slave.

² Cave.

³ Gibbon.

the fierceness of the systematic persecution under which the faithful suffered.

He no longer gave them even the slight shelter of such acts as those of Trajan and Hadrian, but the turbulent populace had full freedom to vent their rage upon the sect, which now had spread far and wide, so that there was no province or city in the imperial dominions, where there was not to be found a brotherhood of earnest faithful men, unobtrusive and harmless when not interfered with, but boldly asserting the superiority of their creed, when attacked by their adversaries. They were daily becoming more and more powerful, their writings were disseminated far and wide, and the strong links that bound them one to another, naturally made them more obnoxious to the civil power, which saw with a jealous eye, how the Christians held aloof from the ceremonial of heathen worship, and frequently from the public sports, which were closely connected with the former, so that the Christians avoided them from a fear of being therein involved in idolatrous proceedings.

Amongst the numerous holy men and women, (for, as S. Chrysostom says; “ In the spiritual contests the lists are open to either sex, lest the women should appear to have a specious excuse wherein to take refuge—the weakness of their sex ; from the one and the other, many there are who have been proclaimed, and have received the crown, that from them we may learn that in

Christ Jesus is neither male nor female; that neither sex nor bodily weakness, nor age, nor any other of these things, can hinder those who would run the race of godliness, if a generous will, and an awakened spirit, and a reverence for God, warm and fervent, be rooted in our hearts;¹⁾—amongst those who died for the Faith, during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the most conspicuous is S. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. As in the case of his fellow-disciple and martyr, S. Ignatius, but little of his early history can be traced. It is probable that Smyrna was his birthplace into a world of trial and suffering, as well as that of more joyful birth into a world of light and rest, when he had ended his work on earth. An early writer (Pionius) relates, that being exposed for sale, a noble matron of the city, Callisto by name, brought him home, and after bestowing upon him a liberal education, made him superintendent of her house and all her affairs, wherein he was remarkable for his liberality in almsgiving. That he was a disciple of the Apostles themselves, we have ample testimony. S. Irenæus (who was taught by Polycarp) expressly says that he “had been instructed by the Apostles and had familiar discourse with many that had seen Christ. . . . He always taught what he had learned from the Apostles, what the Church

¹ Hom. in Ignat.

had handed down, and what is the only true doctrine."¹

Polycarp exercised the office of deacon and catechist² under Bucolus, then Bishop of Smyrna,

¹ Euseb. iv. 14; and Ireneæ. in Euseb. v. 20.

² The deacon's office, though in all respects subordinate to that of the presbyter or priest, was charged with duties of no light importance. The care of the Altar was the first of these; it was the deacon's office to prepare the holy vessels for it, and during divine service no unordained person was allowed to touch these. They were also to receive the offerings and oblations of the people, and present them to the priest, that he might offer them upon the Altar: they were to read the Gospel, and to assist in administering the Holy Eucharist to the congregation, and to carry it to such as by sickness, imprisonment, or other such cause, were absent. They could not consecrate the Holy Elements, and the habit of the Church always seems to have been for the deacon to administer the Chalice, whilst the Bishop or priest administered the Body. Where the ministration of a priest could be obtained for Holy Baptism, it was preferred; but in the absence of such the deacons were authorised to perform that sacrament likewise. So with regard to the reconciliation of penitents, and giving absolution in cases of necessity, where access could be had to neither Bishop nor priest, the deacon was authorised to exercise this authority; and S. Cyprian says, that if any are seized with dangerous illness, they should not wait for either Bishop or priest, but "make their confession before a deacon, that so they may receive imposition of hands and go to the Lord in peace." Again, in extreme cases they had power to excommunicate offenders, if no priest were at hand to do it. In the church they were to superintend the general demeanour of the congregation, and rebuke any irregular or disorderly proceedings; to give

and probably from the efficiency which he therein displayed, he was ordained to the bishopric itself, upon the death of Bucolus. His appointment he

heed that no one talked, or laughed, or slept during Divine Service. So also they were to lead the people, and give notice what part of the service was to be performed; after the sermon they were to bid the non-communicants depart, and to summon the faithful to pray for the whole state of Christ's Church. (Hence our *bidding* prayer.) In some churches the deacons were appointed to preach, but not without the special license and permission of the Bishop. Out of the church services, the deacons performed a variety of offices under the Bishop, so that they were often called his eyes, or his right hand. They carried his orders to the different members of his flock, they distributed alms, they watched over the morals and conduct of the laity, and where they met with ills which they could not remedy, they were to report them to the Bishop. In the first two centuries the inferior offices of the sub-deacons (who brought the holy vessels to the deacons at the Altar-rails, and watched the doors of the church), of exorcists, and others, were united with that of deacon, as well as that of catechist; which latter however, was an office frequently filled up by the highest authority, even the Bishop himself. There were various grades of catechists; some who did not teach in the church at all, but only in private; at other times the priests or deacons catechised, and the Bishop usually himself on Palm Sunday examined such catechumens as were to be admitted to holy Baptism at the approaching Easter. Public catechising in all branches of the Catholic Church continues to be a duty strongly impressed both on the pastor of the flock, and the flock itself. In most parts of the continent, catechising is a regular part of every priest's duty, though usually performed not as a part of their public service, yet in the church, and

received from the Apostles themselves ; to this we have numerous testimonies from the early Fathers. Irenæus says he had not only been instructed by them, but by them also made Bishop of the Church of Smyrna ;¹ and Tertullian, when maintaining that for the Catholicity of any Church, there must needs be shown an apostolic succession, says, “In this manner do the Apostolic Churches reckon their origin, as the Church of Smyrna recounteth that Polycarp was placed there by John.”²

It is received by the Church, that S. Polycarp is the angel of the Church of Smyrna, specially mentioned in the Revelations,³ and his life and death agree well with what is there said : “I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich). . . . Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer : behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days ; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee

before all such as are willing to give heed. The writer has seen the nave of the cathedral at Milan thus occupied, the priests walking to and fro imparting the same glorious Truths which of old S. Ambrose in like manner taught in the self-same city. See Bingham, Orig. Eccles. book iii. The “young men” mentioned in Acts v. 6-10, as bearing out the bodies of Ananias and Sapphira, are supposed by some to have been the deacons of the Church of Jerusalem. See Mosheim, book i. pt. ii. chap. 2.

¹ Euseb. iv. 14. ² Tertul. De Præscrip. Hær. 32.

³ Rev. ii. 8-12. See Usher and Cave.

a crown of life. . . . He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

We have already spoken of the meeting between the Bishop of Symrna and his venerable friend S. Ignatius, and we have seen with what love and reverence the latter wrote to the Smyrneans of S. Polycarp, "their very worthy Bishop." His letter to the Bishop himself also bears a strong testimony to the fixedness and integrity of his character, for S. Ignatius says that he knows his mind "to be fixed as it were upon an immoveable rock;"¹ and he likewise shows his confidence in the efficacy both of S. Polycarp's prayers and his counsels, attributing the peace granted to the Church of Antioch to the former, and beseeching him to send some one who has his esteem and love thither, to comfort and instruct the people, bereft of their rightful Father. "A Christian," S. Ignatius says, "has not the power over himself, but must be always at leisure for God's service. Now this work is both God's and yours, when ye shall have perfected it. For I trust through the Grace of God that ye are ready to every good work that is fitting for you in the Lord. Knowing therefore your earnest affection to the Truth, I have thus exhorted you."¹ The last words of salutation doubtless sounded prophetic in his ears, who had heard that he should "suffer

¹ Epist. to S. Polycarp i.

¹ Ibid. vii.

many things." "May you be glorified in all Eternity, of which you are worthy. . . . I wish you all happiness in our God Jesus Christ, in Whom continue in the unity and Protection of God."

The prayer was fully granted; both the saints knew that happiness with which a stranger intermeddleth not, and when S. Ignatius offered this dying prayer for his friend, it was not for this world that he spoke. Both now wear the Crown of Life.

The only writing of S. Polycarp's which we now possess is connected with this visit of S. Ignatius to Smyrna; it is an epistle to the Philippians, written probably soon after the departure of the former, and before the tidings of his martyrdom had reached Smyrna.¹ S. Polycarp sent to the Philippians the letters he had received from Troas, together with some words of counsel and exhortation from himself, of which Irenæus says that they form "a most perfect and absolute epistle, whence they that are careful of their salvation may learn the character of his faith, and the truth which he preached."

Some few extracts from this epistle may suffice to show how apostolic was that faith, and how earnestly he loved that Truth.

" Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, serve the Lord with fear and in truth, laying aside all empty and vain speech, and the error

¹ Archbishop Wake.

of many ; believing in Him that raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and hath given Him Glory and a Throne at His Right Hand. To Whom all things were made subject, both that are in heaven and are in earth, Whom every living creature shall worship, Who shall come to be the Judge of the quick and dead ; Whose Blood God shall require of them that believe not in Him. But He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also raise up us in like manner, if we do His Will, and walk according to His commandments, and love those things which He loved ; abstaining from all unrighteousness, inordinate affection, and love of money, from evil speaking, false witness, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, or striking for striking, or cursing for cursing ; but remembering what the Lord hath taught us, saying, Judge not and ye shall not be judged ; forgive and ye shall be forgiven ; be ye merciful and ye shall obtain mercy ; blessed are the poor and they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of God. . . The love of money is the root of all evil ; knowing therefore that as we brought nothing into this world, so neither may we carry anything out, let us arm ourselves with the armour of righteousness.¹¹ S. Polycarp then applies special exhortations to the various classes amongst the

¹¹ Polycarp to the Phil. ii. iv.

brethren, reminding all that God sees all blemishes, from Him nothing is hid, but He searches out the very reasonings, and thoughts, and secrets of our hearts. After alluding to the dangerous heresies of the day, especially that which denied the Humanity of our Blessed Lord, he gives a few words of simple exhortation which surely we may well store up and seek to abide by now in the present state of the Church, needing them not less than the Philippians did 1700 years ago.

“Therefore leaving the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the Word that was delivered to us from the beginning, watching in prayer, and persevering in fasting; with supplication beseeching the All Seeing God not to lead us into temptation, as the Lord hath said, the spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak. Let us, therefore, without ceasing, hold stedfastly to Him Who is our Hope, and the Earnest of our righteousness, even Jesus Christ, Who His Ownself bare our sins in His Own Body on the tree, Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His Mouth, but suffered all for us that we might live through Him. Let us therefore imitate His Patience, and if we suffer for His Name, let us glorify Him, for this example He has given us by Himself, and so have we believed.”¹

¹ Polycarp to the Phil. vii. viii.

His parting commendation must have been very precious to those unto whom it was addressed: "Now the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He Himself Who is One everlasting High Priest, build you up in faith and truth, and in all meekness and lenity, in patience and long suffering, in forbearance and chastity, and grant unto you a lot and portion among His servants, and us with you, and to all that are under the heavens, who shall believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His Father. Pray for all the Saints. Pray also for kings, and all that are in authority, and for those who persecuted you, and hate you, and for the enemies of the Cross, that your fruit may be manifest in all, and that ye may be perfect in Christ."¹

Concerning S. Polycarp's episcopal labours we have but little information; yet that he was actively and effectually employed in the office whereto God had called him, we have ample testimony. Amongst those who were so happy as to be his children in the Faith was S. Irenæus, who has described his intercourse with his master in a letter to one Florinus a heretic, who seemingly had once at least known S. Polycarp, if he had not been his disciple: "These doctrines," he says, "are inconsistent with the Church, and calculated to thrust those who follow them into the greatest impiety. . . .

¹ Polycarp to the Phil. xii.

They were never delivered to thee by the presbyters before us, those who were also the immediate disciples of the Apostles. For I saw thee when I was yet a boy in the Lower Asia with Polycarp, moving with great splendour at Court, and endeavouring by all means to gain his esteem. I remember the events of these times much better than those of more recent occurrence. As the studies of youth growing with our minds, unite with them so firmly that I can tell also the very place where the blessed Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse, and also his entrances, his walks, his manner of life, the form of his body, his conversation with the people, and his familiar intercourse with S. John, as he was accustomed to tell, as also his familiarity with those that had seen the Lord.

“ How also he used to relate their discourses, and what things he had heard from them concerning the Lord. Also concerning His miracles, His doctrine, all these were told by Polycarp, in consistency with the Holy Scriptures, as he had received them from the eyewitnesses of the doctrine of salvation. These things, by the mercy of God, and the opportunity then afforded me, I attentively heard, noting them down, not on paper, but in my heart, and these same facts I am always in the habit, by the Grace of God, of recalling faithfully to mind. And I can bear witness in the Sight of God, that if that blessed and apostolic presbyter had heard any such

thing as this, he would have exclaimed, and stopped his ears, and according to his custom would have said ‘Oh my God, unto what times hast Thou reserved me, that I should tolerate these things!’ He would have fled from the place in which he had sat or stood, hearing doctrines like these.”¹

The love and reverence personally enjoyed by S. Polycarp incidentally comes to light through a passage in the relation of his death, where it was said that he was not wont even to take off his own garments, and all his disciples contended who should have the honour of rendering him this slight service, counting it a privilege even to touch him.²

About this time the controversy known as the Quarto-deciman, waxed fierce between the Churches of the East and the West. It regarded the proper time for the celebration of the greatest festival of the Christian Church, Easter Day—the Asiatic Christians fixed it upon the 14th day of the moon, whensover that might fall, whilst the Western Church adhered to that which they esteemed the right and apostolic custom, of always causing the Festival of the Resurrection to fall upon the Lord’s Day or Sunday.

Concerning this controversy, S. Polycarp made a journey to Rome,³ where Anicetus was then

¹ Euseb. bk. v. chap 20. ² Act. xii. ³ Euseb. iv. 14.

Bishop. They were opposed in this matter of controversy, and each remained stedfast in his own opinion. Some years afterwards, we find Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, quoting S. Polycarp as an authority on the Eastern side of the question.¹ But there was no bitterness, no party spirit in their controversy. S. Irenæus says, "When the blessed Polycarp went to Rome in the time of Anicetus, and they had a difference among themselves, they immediately were reconciled, not disputing much with one another on this head. For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe it, because he had always observed it with John, the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the Apostles, with whom he associated; and neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it, who said that he was bound to maintain the practice of the presbyters before him. Which things being so, they communed with each other . . . and they separated from each other in peace; both those that observed and those that did not observe, maintaining peace."² And as the highest possible mark of concord and of brotherly love, Anicetus yielded to S. Polycarp

¹ Euseb. v. 24.

² Eusebius, book v. 24. "Anicète n'eut pas de peine à s'accorder sur ce sujet avec S. Polycarpe, en demeurant tous deux l'un dans ce qu'il avait appris des Apôtres ses maîtres, et l'autre dans la pratique des prêtres ses prédecesseurs."—Tillemont. S. Anicète.

the office of consecrating the Holy Eucharist in his own Church ; thereby setting forth strongly how little it accords with a truly Apostolic and devoted spirit to create schisms and divisions upon slight matters of discipline, wherein the weightier matters of doctrine are not concerned. In these days, when we are prone to pronounce those who differ from us in trifles, to be " guilty of all," should we not do well to remember and bring to bear upon ourselves, the principle which actuated these Primitive Fathers ? and not them only, for we find the same feeling constantly expressed. When some years later, a Bishop of Rome (Victor) would have separated the Churches on the ground of this very controversy, S. Irenæus, the worthy disciple of S. Polycarp, wrote to deprecate such a breach in the strongest terms. He warmly argued that the difference in the length of their Lenten fast could not be a fitting ground for disunion, pointing out how long they had continued at peace one with another, conceding such points as did not affect the verity of the Faith.¹ Years afterwards we find the historian Sozomen writing thus : "They unanimously agreed to follow their respective customs, without abstaining from communion with each other. They very justly reflected that it would be absurd to render a mere point of discipline a ground of schism between those who were

¹ Euseb. v. 24.

bound to each other by the profession of the same faith."¹ And he proceeds to illustrate the principle with various customs peculiar to individual Churches, which yet all agreed in matters of faith. . . . S. Ambrose inculcated the same upon Monica, the mother of S. Augustine, teaching her to comply with the customs of the Church under which she might find herself.²

We should not forget how thoroughly this principle is embodied by the Church of England in her 34th Article, where she says "It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word."

S. Polycarp, however, was not inclined to yield in any matter where the Faith was anyways concerned, as we have already seen from S. Irenæus' letter to Florinus, and which was further exemplified in his conduct, related by S. Jerome, towards Marcion, the leader of a heresy, meeting whom one day in the streets of Rome, he passed him without salutation or sign of recognition; upon which Marcion turned, saying, "Dost thou not know me, Polycarp?" when the Bishop of Smyrna indignantly re-

² S. Aug. Confess. vi. 2.

¹ Soz. book vii. 19.

plied, "Yes, I know thee for the offspring of Satan."¹

¹ The heresy of Marcion divided the Godhead, and owned three principles—first, an Invisible and Good God; second, the Creator of all things; and third, the devil. He denied the Incarnation, although he confessed that a Christ had come upon earth. He altogether rejected the Old Testament, and greatly mutilated the Gospel, excluding all those passages which are quoted from the Law and the Prophets, and which call Christ the Son of the Father. The Valentinian heresy was very similar to that of Marcion, excepting that although plunging into endless metaphysical niceties, their theory was highly immaterial; in practice they were gross and sensual. See Tillemont, *Des Valentiniens et Marcionites*.

CHAPTER II.

"Men mightien dreden wel and skilfully
This lif to lese, min owen dere brother,
If this were living only, and non other.
But there is better lif in other place
That never shall be lost, ne drede thee nougnt."

Chaucer.

PERSECUTION UNDER AURELIUS—ENCYCLICAL EPISTLE TO
SMYRNA—MARTYRDOM OF GERMANICUS—QUINTUS—S.
POLYCARP LEAVES SMYRNA—HIS VISION—HE IS SEIZED
—AND CONDUCTED TO SMYRNA—IS TEMPTED BY THE
GOVERNOR—ARRIVES AT THE ARENA—HIS EXAMINATION
—HIS CONDEMNATION—MARTYRDOM BY FIRE.

We have already said that the Christians met with severe persecution under Marcus Aurelius, and this was aggravated by the various calamitous events which came upon the empire, beginning by a frightful inundation of Rome itself, and a subsequent famine. Disturbances arose in the provinces, and when Verus returned from the East, having vanquished the Parthians, he brought into Italy that most fearful of scourges, oriental pestilence. This calamity was yet unabated when new terrors arose, the Moors devastated Spain, and from Gaul to Illyricum the barbarous nations arose ready to fall upon

the oppressed empire. Whether he himself attributed any efficacy to such means or not, at all events Aurelius indulged the superstition of the people by seeking to propitiate the heathen gods with sacrifices and ceremonies without number, and it may be fairly supposed that the Christians were sacrificed in the same way, as an act of satisfaction to the gods whom they despised and insulted.

Nowhere did the persecution rage more fiercely than in Smyrna. The particulars of it we learn from an encyclical epistle addressed by that Church to the Church of Philadelphia and "all the other assemblies of the Holy Catholic Church."

Happy and blessed, it says, were the martyrs who perished, for their sufferings and all things else were ordered by the Will of God. "Who indeed can choose but admire the greatness of their mind, and that admirable patience, and love of their Master which appeared in them? Who when they were so torn with scourging that their veins and arteries were laid bare, yet endured it. And when all that beheld them, pitied and lamented them, yet they showed so great a generosity of mind, that not one of them let so much as a sigh or a groan escape;—plainly showing that those holy martyrs of Christ, at the very time when they were thus tormented, were absent from the body; or rather that the Lord stood by them, and conversed with

them. Wherefore being supported by the Grace of Christ they despised all the torments of the world, by the sufferings of an hour redeeming themselves from everlasting punishment. For this cause even the fire of their cruel and barbarous executioners seemed cold to them, whilst they hoped thereby to escape that fire which is eternal, and shall never be extinguished; and beheld with the eyes of Faith, those good things which are reserved for them that endure unto the end, which neither eye hath seen nor ear heard, nor have they entered into the heart of man. But to them they were now revealed by the Lord as being no longer men, but already become angels. In like manner, those who were condemned to the beasts, and kept a long time in prison, underwent cruel torments, being forced to lie upon sharp spikes laid under their bodies, and tormented with divers other sorts of punishments, that so, if it were possible, the tyrant, by the length of their sufferings, might have brought them to deny Christ.”¹

Tertullian reproaches the authorities with their inconsistency in thus seeking to force the Christians to deny their Faith: “to others,” he says “ye apply tortures to make them confess; to the Christians alone, to make them deny; whereas if it were a sin, we indeed should deny it, and ye by the

¹ Act. S. Polycarp ii.

tortures would compel us to confess it. . . . One crieth out, ‘I am a Christian.’ He sayeth what he is: thou wouldest hear what he is not. Sitting in authority to draw out the truth, from us alone do ye labour to draw out falsehood. ‘I am,’ saith he, ‘that which thou askest if I am. Why torture me to unsay it? I confess, and thou torturtest me: what wouldest thou do if I denied? Certainly ye do not easily lend credit to others when they deny us; if we deny, ye forthwith credit.’¹ But as the same author says, “Christianity feeleth no wonder at her condition: she knoweth that she liveth a stranger upon earth, that among aliens she easily findeth foes; but that she hath her birth, her home, her hope, her favour, and her worth in the heavens.”²

Amongst the martyrs who were crowned at Smyrna, Germanicus stands prominent; he was brought into the arena with several others, whom he encouraged and strengthened till the most fearful grew bold. Germanicus himself was in the freshness and vigour of youth, and the Consul Statius Quadratus being moved with pity, strove to persuade him not to sacrifice himself thus to a mere delusion. But the noble-hearted youth, without heeding him, gathered himself together, and provoked the ferocious beast that met him, “being desirous,” says the narrator, “to be the more quickly delivered from

¹ Tertul. Apol. ii.

² Apol. i.

a wicked and unjust world."¹ The spectators were amazed at the courage and self-devotion of the youth, and for a moment they paused as in admiration, but the next moment arose a mighty shout, "Away with the Christians! Polycarp to the lion!"

His time was not quite come yet, however; the next victim was a Phrygian, named Quintus, who had thrust himself and some others upon the enraged heathen, inviting martyrdom, and trusting to his own courage and fortitude to support him. But in such an hour the heart of the strongest man may fail, unless his eyes are opened of God, so that he may see the mighty guardians who watch over Christ's chosen servants, and know that they that be with him are more than they that be with his enemies. So it proved with Quintus, for when he saw the furious beasts ready to spring upon him, he shrank back, and the Consul persuaded him to sacrifice to the gods and save his life. The Church of Smyrna comments upon this, saying: "For which cause, brethren, we do not commend those who offer themselves to persecution, seeing the Gospel teaches no such thing."²

When the Bishop heard that he had been called for in the arena, he was not at all disturbed, but resolved to remain at his post in the city, and await God's Pleasure concerning

¹ Act. iii.

² Act. iv.

him. But his friends and disciples reminding him how our Blessed Lord had said to His Apostles, that when they were persecuted in one city, they should flee unto another, and also setting before him that his loss would to them be irreparable, they induced him to leave the city, and he withdrew into a neighbouring village in company with a few friends, "doing nothing night or day but praying for all men, and for the Churches that were in all the world, according to his custom."¹

Three days before he was captured, when weariness had overcome the aged man, and sleep crept upon him whilst in the act of prayer, he dreamed that his head lay upon a pillow of fire, which on awaking he told to his friends, saying that he took it as a sign that he should perish by fire.

Once again the arena at Smyrna echoed with the maddening shout, "Polycarp to the lions!" and the authorities responded by sending to take him. When these tidings reached his friends, they persuaded Polycarp once more to seek for safety by removing to another village, and hardly had he left the first place of refuge, when the soldiers arrived at it. They found in it two young men, servants of the Bishop, and by the application of torture they extracted from one of these the place of his master's retreat. The

¹ Act. iii.

youth himself was not saved by his betrayal, for he was forthwith sent to the arena, that Polycarp might receive his proper portion, being made partaker of Christ, and they that betrayed him undergo the punishment of Judas."¹

Meanwhile the party of soldiers and horsemen proceeded as though against some dangerous robber, through the darkness of the night, to seize the meek and aged Bishop. He was in a small upper room, whence he could easily have effected his escape, but having twice yielded to the prayers of his friends in avoiding captivity, he now considered that his time was come, and that again to fly would be wanting in Christian faith and courage. On hearing that the soldiers had entered the house he only said, "The Will of the Lord be done," and calmly and with dignity he descended to meet them. When the soldiers saw the object of their search, that he was an aged, peaceable, and dignified old man, unmoved at the sight of their weapons and the thought of the horrid death to which they were going to lead him, they were astonished and subdued; and some of them asked, whether it had needed so much warlike display to seize such an one?

S. Polycarp ordered that his capturers should be supplied with food and wine, requesting of them that they would allow him a short space

¹ Act. vi.

of liberty for prayer. The request was granted ; and it must have been a solemn time to the bystanding Christians, to watch on the one hand the imperial soldiers carousing, yet not altogether with their wonted license, for they were overawed and sobered by the demeanour of their prisoner, whilst some were even touched to the heart, and repented that they had ever come forth on such an errand against so holy a man, when, for the space of two hours, they heard him praying fervently for all men whatsoever that he had ever known, noble or humble, friends or foes, and for the whole Catholic Church throughout the world. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availleth much, and some of those very soldiers may, from that prayer of the venerable martyr, have been led to transfer their allegiance to his Master, and to fight under His Banner unto the death.

His prayer ended, S. Polycarp signified to the soldiers his readiness to depart ; they mounted him upon an ass, and conducted him to the city. It must have been early in the morning by the time the guard and their venerable prisoner entered Smyrna. As they approached the city, they were met by Herod the Tetrarch and his father Nicetas, who were among the most bitter of the persecutors. These men took the Bishop into their chariot, in order to persuade him if possible, to deny his Lord ;

and that not from any kindly intention of saving his life, for they were his personal foes, but because of the discredit it would throw upon Christianity, if so well known and respected a champion could be induced to falter in his faith, whereas on the contrary, each triumphant and willing martyrdom only confirmed the truth and superiority of that Belief, which could make weak women, tender youths, and aged men, indifferent to the most fearful bodily anguish, through their conviction of That which was unseen, invisible, yet undoubted. "What harm," Herod asked, "was there in saying 'my Lord the Emperor,' and offering a sacrifice, so that he might save his life?" Polycarp answered nothing; for though he was willing to acknowledge the temporal power of the Emperor, he well knew that by this title lord, his interrogators meant more. Tertullian has put into words the feelings which doubtless were within the martyr's breast, and which he would have uttered, had he not known how vain such an effort would be. "I will not call the Emperor a god, both because I cannot speak falsely, and because I dare not mock him. He hath enough in being called an emperor: this also is a great name which is given him of God. . . . Even when triumphing in his most lofty chariot, he is warned that he is a man, for he is prompted from behind: 'Look behind thee, remember that thou art a man.' . . . He were

not so great, if he were then called a god, because he would not be truly called so. Augustus, the founder of the empire, would not even have himself called Lord, for this also is a Name of God. I will by all means call the Emperor Lord, but only when I am not compelled to call him Lord in the stead of God. Nevertheless to him I am a freeman, for there is One That is my Lord, the Almighty and Eternal God, the Same Who is his Lord also. Be religious towards God, thou that wouldest have Him propitious to the Emperor. Cease to believe any other to be God, and so likewise to call him God who hath need of Gon."¹

Herod and Nicetas continued to urge S. Polycarp with their vain arguments, and at last he spoke, but only to say that their persuasions were ineffectual. Upon this all their hopes of success being destroyed, the magistrates began to abuse Polycarp in virulent language, and finally turned him out of their chariot so rudely that he fell to the ground, and received a severe bruise in so doing.

But he who was prepared to face death, did not count a wound as any great thing, and accordingly he hastened on, and soon arrived at the arena, where the tumult and uproar was great. Just as the aged Saint entered within the lists, a voice from Heaven was heard, say-

¹ Apol. 34.

ing, “Be strong, Polycarp, and quit thyself like a man.”¹ Many heard the cheering words, and great must have been their supporting influence both to Polycarp himself and to the Christian bystanders.

When the people beheld Polycarp led into the lists a prisoner, a great tumult arose again; but it was stilled when the proconsul began to examine him, inquiring first, whether he were Polycarp the Christian, and then proceeding to urge him to deny the Faith, and not expose his grey hairs to a cruel and ignominious death. He concluded by saying: “Swear by Cæsar’s fortune, and say, Take away the atheists.”²

The holy man looked around him with a sorrowful and stern countenance upon the multitude of unbelievers, and then extending his hand towards them, he looked up to heaven and said solemnly: “Take away the atheists.” Again the proconsul pressed him saying: “Swear, and I will set thee at liberty; reject the Christ.” Then at last his anger was kindled, and with indignation Polycarp answered: “Eighty and six years have I now served Christ, and He has never done me any wrong; how then can I blaspheme my Saviour and God?”

¹ Act. ix.

² The heathen called the Christians atheists, and their religion the atheism or iniquity, because they derided the worship of the heathen gods.—Antiq. Eccles. i. 3.

Yet once more Statius urged him, saying : “Swear by the genius of Cæsar.” Polycarp replied : “Seeing thou art so vainly urgent with me that I should swear, as thou callst it, by the genius of Cæsar,¹ seeming as if thou didst not know what I am ; hear me freely professing it to thee, that I am a Christian. But if thou farther desirest to hear what Christianity is, appoint a time, and thou shalt hear it.”

Statius told him that he might address the people (who were thirsting for his blood) ; but the Bishop refused to make any popular appeal, saying : “To thee have I offered to give a reason of my Faith, for we are taught to pay all due honour (such only excepted as would be contrary to our religion) to the powers and authorities which are ordained of God. But

¹ All profane swearing was severely condemned by the Christians, although lawful and needful oaths were permitted. The Christians did not refuse to swear by the emperor's safety or health, though they would not swear by his genius. See *Antiq. Eccles.* xvi. 7. 4. Tertullian says : “As we swear not by the genii of the Cæsars, so we do swear by their health, which is of greater dignity than all genii. Ye know that the genii are called dæmones. . . . We, in the emperors, reverence the judgment of God, Who hath set them over the nations. We know that in them is that safe which God hath willed, and therefore we would have that oath ; but as to the demons, that is the genii, we are wont to adjure them, that we may cast them out of men, not to swear by them so as to confer on them the honour pertaining to Gon.”—*Apol.* xxxii.

for the people, I esteem them not worthy that I should give any account of my Faith to them."¹

Seeing that persuasion could effect nothing, the proconsul began to use threats. "I have wild beasts waiting," he said, "to which I will cast thee, except thou repent."

"Call for them," Polycarp answered, "for we Christians are fixed in our minds not to change from good to evil; but for me it will be good to be changed from evil to good."²

"Seeing thou despisest the wild beasts," Statius rejoined, "I will commit thee to the fire unless thou repent."

Again the Bishop answered: "Thou threatenest me with fire which burns for an hour, and so is extinguished; but thou knowest not the fire of the Judgment to come, and of that eternal punishment which is reserved for the ungodly. But why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt."

When he had spoken thus, all S. Polycarp's features shone with confidence and joy, so that "his very countenance was full of grace."³ It was clear that nothing could move the stedfastness of his faith, and the proconsul caused

¹ Not as disdaining to instruct the lowest or most ignorant, but that in the state of frenzied excitement the people were then under, they were unfit to listen to the calm words of Christian Truth.

² 1 Cor. xv. 53.

³ Act. xii.

proclamation to be made three times from the middle of the lists as the custom was, “Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian.” Then Jews and heathen alike joined in a storm of fury, crying out : “This is the great doctor of Asia, the father of the Christians and the overthrower of our gods, he that has taught so many not to sacrifice, nor pay any worship to the gods.” And then for the last time, the cry was heard : “Polycarp to the lions!” But the ruler of the games, Philip by name, told the people that the combats being over, it was not lawful for him to fetch forth the wild beasts again, and so with one accord they demanded that the Bishop should be burnt. S. Polycarp stood ready to die as God willed, and remembering his dream concerning the burning pillow.

The infuriated populace hastened to collect wood from the neighbouring shops and baths, and but little time elapsed ere the pile was ready to receive the Christian martyr. Meanwhile the object of their rage was occupied in divesting himself of his upper garments, with as much composure as he would prepare for his nightly rest—from which indeed, he was wont to wake to another day’s care and labours, but from the sleep now at hand, he well knew he should wake to never-ending Day and Life Eternal.

The executioners would have nailed him to the cross, but S. Polycarp asked them not to do so, saying, “Let me alone as I am, for He

Who has given me strength to endure the fire, will also enable me to stand firm, without your securing me by nails." His request was granted, and he was only bound to the pile, as a chosen sacrifice acceptable unto God. Then the holy man, looking up to heaven, said: "Oh Lord God Almighty, the Father of Thy Well-Beloved and Blessed Son, Jesus Christ, by Whom we have received the knowledge of Thee, the God of angels, powers, and of every creature, and of the whole race of just men who live in Thy Presence; I give Thee hearty thanks that Thou hast vouchsafed to bring me to this day and to this hour, that I should have a part in the number of Thy martyrs, in the Cup of Thy Christ, to the Resurrection of eternal Life, both of Soul and body, in the incorruptibleness of the Holy Ghost. Into which number may I be accepted this day before thee, as a fair and acceptable sacrifice, such as Thou the True God, with Whom is no falsehood, hast both before ordained and manifested, and also fulfilled. For this, and for all things else, I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee by the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ Thy beloved Son, with Whom, to Thee, and to the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and to all succeeding ages. Amen."

No sooner had he ended this prayer than the executioners lighted the wood, and the flames rose immediately to a very great height: "when

behold, a wonderful thing appeared to us who had the happiness to see it, and who were reserved by Heaven to report to others what had happened. For the flame making a kind of arch, like the sail of a ship filled with the wind, encompassed as it were in a circle the body of the holy martyr, who stood in the midst of it not as if his flesh were burnt, but as gold or silver glowing in the furnace. Moreover, so sweet a smell came from it, as if frankincense or some rich spice had been smoking there.”¹

When the heathen had recovered from their first amazement at this striking appearance, they sent one of their spearmen to thrust through the body, which being done, immediately so much blood flowed from S. Polycarp’s aged and wasted body as to extinguish the flames. Almost apprehensive that even the lifeless remains of one so strong in the Power of the Lord should attract new believers to the Crucified Lord, Nicetas, Herod’s father, besought him not to allow that the Christians should have his body, “lest forsaking Him that was crucified, they should begin to worship this Polycarp.”

“Not considering,” say these primitive brethren, “that neither is it possible for us ever to forsake Christ, Who suffered for the salvation of all such as shall be saved throughout the whole world,

¹ Act. xv. A.D. 166.

the Righteous for the ungodly; nor worship any other beside Him. For Him, indeed, as being the Son of God, we do adore; but as for the martyrs, we worthily love them, as the disciples and followers of our Lord, and upon the account of their exceeding great affection towards their Master and King. Of whom may we also be made companions and fellow-disciples."¹

In consequence of this interference, the centurion caused S. Polycarp's remains to be burnt in the pile, whence however, the brethren saved some of his bones, "more precious than the richest jewels, and tried above gold; and deposited them where it was fitting; where, being gathered together as we have opportunity, with joy and gladness, the Lord shall grant unto us to celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom, both in memory of those who have suffered, and for the exercise and preparation of those who may hereafter suffer."²

"Such was the Passion of the blessed Polycarp," (so writes the Church of Smyrna); "he is spoken of by the very Gentiles themselves in every place, as having been not only an eminent teacher, but also a glorious martyr, whose death all desire to imitate, as having been every way conformable to the Gospel of Christ. For having by patience overcome the unjust governor, and so received the Crown of Immortality, he now,

¹ Act. xvii.

² Act. xviii.

together with the Apostles and all other righteous men who have gone before, with great triumph glorifies God, even the Father, and blesses our Lord, the Governor both of our souls and bodies, and Shepherd of the Catholic Church which is over all the earth."

It is not exactly certain to what age S. Polycarp had attained, for the eighty-six years during which he himself said he had served Christ, must of course date from his Baptism,¹ not his mortal birth; but he was probably a hundred years old, from what is mentioned of his intercourse with the Apostles.

The Church of Rome commemorates S. Polycarp on January 26th, and the Greek Church on Feb. 28rd. It is said that the amphitheatre where he suffered is yet in great part standing, as also the side dens where the wild beasts were kept. His tomb is also to be seen in a little chapel, which is resorted to by the Greeks on his anniversary.

¹ "Christians are made, not born such"--Tertul.
Apol. xviii.

S. JUSTIN,

MARTYR.

"Upon the solitary shore
Stood Justin, rapt in Plato's lore,
Seeking, with self-abstracted mind,
The beatific light to find.
A grey-hair'd man, on that lone wild,
With venerable aspect mild,
Before him came, and bade him scan
Visions too high for sinful man :—
'Pray thou to God both day and night
To ope to thee the gates of light,
Reveal'd of God in Christ alone.'
In Justin's breast a fire was sown ;—
Borne heaven-ward in that glowing flame,
His mantle he let fall, a martyr's honour'd name."

The Cathedral.



S. JUSTIN.

“ Thrice blest are they who feel their loneliness :
To whom nor voice of friend nor pleasant scene
Brings that on which the saddened heart can lean :
Yea, the rich earth, garbed in its daintiest dress
Of light and joy, doth but the more oppress,
Claiming responsive smiles and rapture high :
Till sick at heart beyond the veil they fly,
Seeking His Presence, Who Alone can bless.”

Lyra Apostolica.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE OF JUSTIN—HIS EDUCATION—FOLLOWS THE STOIC PHILOSOPHY—THE PERIPATETIC—THE PYTHAGOREAN—THE PLATONIC—HIS WANDERINGS ON THE SEA-SHORE—MEETS A STRANGER—HIS INSTRUCTIONS—JUSTIN BECOMES A CHRISTIAN—WRITES TO THE GREEKS—PERSECUTIONS ENDURED BY THE CHRISTIANS—HIS DESCRIPTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

“THE noble army of Martyrs,” who once by their death, and now by their eternal life, praise the Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, numbers within its triumphant ranks all ages, all sexes, and every variety of condition. Not only the poor untaught peasant in his simple-minded faith was ready to give up all things, and die

rather than deny his Lord, but men of noble birth trained from their infancy in all the subtleties of a philosopher's school, when the Truth became known unto them, were ready to say that though they "understood all mysteries and had all knowledge," yet such should profit them little, if they had not that wisdom which is "the breath of the Power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the Glory of the Almighty—the brightness of the Everlasting Light, and the unspotted mirror of the Power of God."¹ Such was the case with the great light of the Church concerning whom we are now to speak; that wisdom which is from above entering into his soul, he became a "friend of God."²

S. Justin was the son of Priscus, whose father Bacchius was one of a colony of Greeks who had settled at Neapolis, the ancient Sichem,³ and the principal city of Samaria. Under its new inhabitants, this town was styled Flavia.⁴ It was here that Justin was born, but in what precise year is not known—probably about the year 103 A.D. Eusebius speaks of Justin as following near upon the Apostles;⁵ he calls himself a disciple of the Apostles,⁶ meaning probably either of their

¹ Wisdom vii. 25.

² Wisdom vii. 27.

³ The modern Nâbulus, or Nâblous.

⁴ Neapolis, in honour of Flavius Vespasian.

⁵ Euseb. ii. 13.

⁶ Epist. to Diag. "Having been a disciple of the Apostles, I am become a teacher of the Gentiles."

immediate successors, or as is still more probable, of their writings and traditions.

Priscus was a Gentile ; he bestowed upon his son a liberal and careful education in all such secular learning as was deemed needful by the world for one in his position, and Justin left his home for foreign travel with a bright vision of intellectual beauty and enjoyment before him, glorying in the clearness and vigour of mind which he felt within himself, and which seemed then to be such as with an irresistible power would burst through all fetters, and infuse its own living spirit into the dull, cold world with which he was surrounded.

How many begin life with the same hope ! How many have felt within them some lingering traces of that power for better things which was bestowed upon our race when God said :—" Let Us make man in Our Own Image and Likeness "; and how many have yearned with a strength which seemed as though it were too real and living to pass away, to devote themselves beyond ordinary men to a pure and exalted life, therein to attain unto a satisfaction and fulness of rest which they have never yet experienced, but which they do not therefore deem unattainable ! They have yet to learn the harsh and bitter lesson that on earth it is never to be attained. The fullest rest here is then most near when we can most entirely lay aside all hope or thought to win it for ourselves, and trust all that con-

cerns our peace and welfare most entirely to God.

To some the consciousness of failure comes but slowly: they struggle on from point to point, and ever think they see before them and within their grasp, that repose in this world which will again recede before them. Others, soon discouraged and repelled by the cold, hard world, which mocks and sneers at their visions, which its wisdom knows to be unreal, sink back in despair, and fail to seek that which alone would fill the longing heart.

"Then comes heart ache, care, distress,
Blighted hope, and loneliness.

• • • •
Loftiest aims by earth defiled,
Gleams of wisdom sin-beguiled."

Happy they who, before their first freshness of heart is passed away, are led by the loving Hand of a Heavenly Father, it may be by no smooth or gentle path, but by early sorrow and pain, whether of mind or body, to turn all those bright longings and ideal glories to that only aim where they are certain to meet with sympathy and with fulfilment. It may not perhaps, be such fulfilment as they had once looked to, but instead of the earthly rest they had sought,—a rest such as was never designed for man, and would inevitably prove fatal to his spiritual progress,—He will give them that holy and abiding consciousness, which, when once by God's Blessing

it is rooted in the heart, finds new strength and nourishment daily, and in each event of life a consciousness that we—

“Came not to our place by accident,
It is the very place God meant for thee;”

and that a perfection and fulness of joy is ever set before us far beyond the brightest ideal man's heart ever framed, towards which each day, from that when in the font of regeneration we were made inheritors not of earthly but of heavenly rest, brings us nearer; our God Himself “wiling us, year by year,” till in the grave whereon the shadow of His Cross rests, we cease from this world's hopes and visions, to enter upon everlasting certainty.

The natural tendency of a highly cultivated but unchristianised mind, is to seek for satisfaction and rest in the depths of philosophy; accordingly Justin betook himself to a Stoic philosopher,¹ under whose tutelage he remained for a considerable time, but Justin learnt nothing of that which he sought after, the True Nature of God, for as he tells us, his master knew nothing of it himself, and did not seek the knowledge. Accordingly Justin abandoned him, and put himself under the instructions of a Peripatetic philosopher; but the pupil was speedily disgusted with his master, who appeared to him a self-sufficient man, wanting in the spirit of

¹ Dial. Tryph. ii.

true philosophy, one who moreover bargained for the price of his instructions in such a manner as to cause Justin to decline him as a teacher before he had gone far in his school. Still Justin was unwilling to believe that he should not find the object of his search, the true spirit of philosophy, and repose for his restless, inquiring soul therein; so undaunted by his double failure, the young man applied to an eminent philosopher of the Pythagorean school. In their preliminary conversation the teacher inquired of Justin whether he understood astronomy, geometry, and music, saying that it was impossible to become a proficient in the art of happiness unless he possessed a knowledge of these sciences, which would fit the mind for intellectual, rather than sensual enjoyment, and enable it to discern the beautiful and good. Justin was compelled to own that he had not these requirements, and much to his discomfiture (for he entertained a high reverence for his examiner) he received his dismissal. At first he seems to have thought of recommencing his education, and studying the desired accomplishments, but the long delay appalled him, and he abandoned all hope of becoming a Pythagorean philosopher. Some time then elapsed, which Justin passed in a painful state of uncertainty and perplexity, after which, under the influence of a Platonic philosopher whose society he frequented, the search after happiness seemed ended,

and Justin joined the followers of Plato, and to his own fancy made infinite advances in the attainment of true knowledge.

Yet all was not as he had expected ; his dream of life had fled, and Justin was not content. Constantly forsaking the city and its noise, the young philosopher sought the sea-shore, where in silence and solitude he might ponder upon the mysteries which he felt within him, and as it were fixing his mental eye upon one object, his longing after rest, strive to penetrate the unseen causes which hindered him from attaining to it.

“ The beauty of the universe
Was lying on me like a curse ;
Only the lone surge at my feet
Uttered a soothing murmur sweet,
As every weary, broken wave
Sunk gently to a quiet grave,
Dying on the bosom of the sea :
And death grew beautiful to me,
Until it seemed a mother mild,
And I like some too happy child—
A happy child, that tired with play,
Through a long summer holiday,
Runs to his mother’s arms to weep
His little weariness asleep.
Rest—rest—all passion that once stirred
My heart, had ended in one word—
My one desire to be at rest,
To lay my head on any breast,
Where there was hope that I might keep
A dreamless and unbroken sleep :
And the lulled ocean seemed to say,
With me is quiet—come away.

• • •

I thought upon the vanished time,
And my irrevocable prime,
My baffled purpose, wasted years,
My sin, my misery—and my tears
Fell thick and fast upon the sands."¹

One evening as Justin wandered thus rapt in thought, he unexpectedly perceived at his side a venerable old man, whose benevolent yet unearthly aspect excited both reverence and awe in the mind of the solitary wanderer, who never before had been disturbed in that lonely spot by footstep of man. In his astonishment Justin stood and gazed in silence upon him; presently the stranger began to speak to him, and inquired wherefore he wandered thus alone. Justin's heart was won by his paternal and imposing manner; without reserve he entered into all his troubles and perplexities. When the old man heard that he was a philosopher, he inquired of him what philosophy was? To which Justin replied, that it was the knowledge of being and the understanding of truth; and that on such knowledge happiness was a necessary attendant.

"What then," replied the stranger, "do you call God?"

"That Which is," Justin answered, "and always continues to be the same, and is the cause of the existence of all other beings, is God."

¹ Justin Martyr. Rev. R. C. Trench.

Assenting to his, this instructor demanded how the philosophers could think or speak of God aright, when they had no knowledge of Him, and had neither seen nor heard Him at any time? Justin answered that the outward eye indeed could not see God, but that the mind could perceive and know Him. The venerable man told Justin that the mind or soul of itself could not see God, but only by the aid of the Holy Spirit, and then entered upon the deep subject of the soul's immortality, saying that it would indeed be joyful news to the wicked that the soul could be annihilated and perish eternally: but that we know "the souls of the righteous to be reserved in a place of happiness, and those of the wicked and unjust in a place of misery and torment, in expectation of the great Day of Judgment."¹

Entirely rejecting the authority of Plato and Pythagoras, the venerable stranger pointed out to his attentive listener an authority far superior: "There were, many years ago, some men that are far more ancient than any of those that are called philosophers; who were blessed, just, and lovers of God, who spake as they were inspired by the Divine Spirit, and foretold things to come which are now fulfilled. These are called prophets. They only saw the truth, and published it to the world, neither reverencing nor

¹ Dialog. Tryph. v.

fearing the person of any man ; nor were they puffed up with the desire of vain glory ; but being filled with the Holy Ghost, spoke those things only which they heard and saw. Their writings are still extant, which whosoever reads and believes, may be fully instructed concerning the beginning and end of things, and in whatsoever else is necessary for a philosopher to know and understand. They have not indeed filled their writings with demonstrations, as being far above all demonstration the most faithful witnesses of the truth. For those things which have already been, and are daily accomplished before our eyes, force us to assent to the truth of those things which were spoken by them."¹

Thus did the ambassador of Heaven speak to his awe-struck listener, whose powerful and clear mind instantly perceived the difference between the simple, heart-stirring truths now set before him, and the laboured perplexity of the systems in which he had vainly sought to rest.

" His words seemed not his own, but given—
I could have deemed one spake from Heaven

¹ Dialog. viii.

" Did no fond heart, with nobler instinct fraught,
Sigh for the substance which those shadows taught?
On trembling pinions seek to soar above,
Refin'd by sorrow, and sublim'd by love,—
Till Faith discern'd what reason dimly scann'd,
And Hope gave promise of the better land?"

Burgon.

Of hope and joy, of life and death,
And immortality through Faith,
Of that great change commenced within,
The Blood that cleanses from all sin,
That can wash out the inward stain,
And consecrate the heart again."¹

Hour after hour the conversation lasted, and deeper and deeper the solemn words sank into Justin's heart. At last, having exhorted Justin to pray fervently that the gates of Light might be opened unto him, for that these things cannot be discerned or known save by them unto whom God and His Christ have given understanding, the holy being vanished away, never more to meet the eyes of his disciple on this earth. But though Justin saw him not, who shall say that the same ministering power did not watch over him, and give him courage to die as he did, a bold, unshrinking martyr's death? In the great day, when those gates of Light shall be opened, and pour their golden floods upon the redeemed for ever, he who was rescued from the abyss of unbelief, may haply recognise his blest teacher and guide amongst those holy angels of God, who joy over the sinner that repenteth.

The resting-place was now found; and though, instead of prosperity and honour, henceforth contempt and derision, persecution and martyrdom awaited Justin, yet had he never cause to

¹ Rev. R. C. Trench.

wish that his eyes had remained unopened. All uncertainty and doubt cleared away, as he penetrated deeper and deeper into the glorious doctrines of Christianity, and his faith was confirmed by the superhuman courage and self-devotion which he witnessed in the Christian brethren. "When I heard the Christians traduced and reproached," he says, "and yet saw them fearlessly advancing to meet death, and venturing upon all those things that are accounted most dreadful and amazing to human nature, I resolved within myself that it was impossible that such men should wallow in vice. . . . For what man who is a slave to intemperance and pleasure, can cheerfully bid death welcome, which he knows must end such pleasures, and would not rather by all means seek to prolong his life, and conceal himself from the magistrate, rather than voluntarily betray himself?"¹

"Thus" (to use Justin's own words), "I became a philosopher."² In the highest sense truly he did, rejecting the wisdom of the world, which is foolishness with God, and cleaving to that

¹ *Apol. ii. s. 12.*

² "Quelques uns luy attribuent cette maxime, que la fin et le but d'un philosophe est de devenir semblable à Dieu autant qu'un homme en est capable. Selon cette idée qu'il avoit de la philosophie. . . . il n'y a rien de si grand, ni qui convienne davantage à un saint martyr, que le titre de philosophe."—Tillemont. *Vie de S. Justin.*

which is the “gift of God”;¹ so that whereas before his heart had been “as ashes, his hope more vile than earth,” now he “knew his Maker, and Him that inspired into him an active soul, and breathed in a living spirit.”²

S. Justin continued to wear his philosopher’s mantle, as was indeed usual amongst the converts from the heathen schools. Much regret was excited amongst his former associates at the loss of so able a disciple from their ranks, and finding that many wondered at his change,³ knowing nothing of that which had conquered his proud spirit of worldly knowledge, Justin addressed an epistle to them,—his first Christian writing. In this he says: “Think not O Greeks, that I have hastily and without judgment and deliberation, departed from your religion and its ceremonies. I could find nothing therein sacred, or worthy to be accepted of God. Your rites, as they are conducted, show forth only folly and intemperance, and no sooner does a man seek for instruction, even from your greatest and most learned teachers, than he finds himself perplexed with a thousand difficulties, worse than before.

¹ Eccl. i. 18

² Wisdom xv. 10, 11.

³ “They say, ‘A good man Caius Seius, only he is a Christian,’ or, ‘I marvel that that wise man Lucius, hath suddenly become a Christian.’ No one reflecteth whether Caius be not therefore good, and Lucius wise, because a Christian, or therefore a Christian because wise and good.” Tertul. Apol. iii.

. . . Come ye rather to us, O Greeks, and acquire the true wisdom, learn a holy religion, know the King Immortal. Be ye what I am, I once was even as ye now are. This it was that conquered me; hear the holy and satisfying doctrine, which, as the charm of magic, banishes from the soul all impure and corrupt affections, and cleanses the spring whence proceeds all evil, enmities, divisions, envy, wrath, and all other bad passions; the which when overcome, the freed soul is blest with calmness and peace, the weights that bowed it down being gone, it soars to its Creator, Whence it came forth, returning to Him Whose Likeness it bore."¹

We know very little concerning the life of Justin between the times of his birth unto Life and his martyrdom; but from his own writings we know what was the lot of the Christians, a name which it was his glory to bear. "The Christians," he writes, "neither by country or speech, nor by civil customs, are distinguished from the rest of men. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor use any peculiar dialect, nor practise a distinct manner of life. Nor is there any code of instruction invented for them by the skill and care of busy-minded men, nor are they the patrons of human doctrine, as is the case with some. But inhabiting both Grecian and

¹ Orat. Græc. 5.

barbarian cities, and, as each was called, following their native customs in apparel and food, and in the other circumstances of life, they exhibit the condition of their own polity as admirable and without condition marvellous. They inhabit countries where they are natives, yet as strangers; they share in all things as citizens, and endure all things as aliens. Every foreign land is to them as a native country, and every native country as a foreign land. They marry like all others, they have children, and do not cast off their offspring. They have a common table: they live in the flesh, but not according to the flesh. They pass their life upon earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the appointed laws, and by their own lives excel those laws. They love all men, and are persecuted by all men. They are unknown, and are condemned. They are put to death, and spring to life. They are poor, and make many rich. They are in need of all things, and they abound in all things. They are dishonoured, and in those dishonours they are glorified. They are blasphemed by men, and are justified by God. They are reviled, and blessed. They are reproached, and pay reverence. For doing good, they are punished as evil. When punished, they rejoice as quickened to life. They are warred upon by Jews as aliens, and are persecuted by the Greeks, and those who hate them have no cause to give for their hatred. But to

speak plainly, what the soul is in the body, these Christians are in the world.¹ The soul is spread through all the members of the body, and Christians through the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, yet is not of the body; and Christians dwell in the world, yet are not of the world. The soul, invisible in itself, is kept in the body which is visible; and Christians are known as dwelling in the world, but their worship remains invisible. The flesh hates the soul, and wars against it, though not injured by it, because it is hindered from indulging its lusts. The world also hates Christians, though injured by them in nothing, because they are arrayed against its pleasures. The soul loves the flesh that hates it and its members, and Christians love those that hate them. The soul has been shut up in the body, and itself restrains the body; and Christians are shut up in the world as in a prison, but they themselves restrain the world. The immortal soul dwells in a mortal tabernacle, and Christians sojourn among things corruptible, awaiting the immortality of the Heavens. The soul when straitened in meats and drinks is made better, and Christians being persecuted daily increase the more. So noble a station has God appointed them, which it is not lawful for them to refuse. For this, as I said, is no earthly invention that has

¹ "Ye are the light of the world."

been delivered to them, nor is it the judgment of a mortal which they deem it right to guard so carefully, nor are they intrusted with a charge of human mysteries; but the Almighty, and All-creating, and Invisible God Himself, has from the heavens Himself planted among men the Truth, and the Holy and Incomprehensible Word, and has rooted It firmly in their hearts. Not sending to men, as one might have supposed, some servant, or angel, or ruler, either any of those that order earthly things, or any of those exercising principality in Heaven, but the very Framer and Artificer of all things, by whom He created the heavens, by whom He shut in the sea within its own bounds, whose mysterious appointments all the elements faithfully obey; from whom they received, to keep them, the measures of their daily courses; Whom the moon obeys while He bids her to shine by night; Whom the stars obey which follow the pathway of the moon; by whom all things have been appointed, and distributed and ordered, the heavens and the things in the heavens; earth and the things in the earth; the sea, and the things in the sea; fire, air, and the deep; the things in the height, the things in the depth, the things between. Did He therefore send Him to them as any man might suppose, for tyranny and fear and consternation? No, truly; but in meekness and gentleness, He sent Him as a King sending a Son Who

is a King. He sent Him as God, He sent Him as to men, He sent Him as a Saviour. As obeying, not as compelled; for to be compelled pertains not to God. He sent Him in Love, and not in Judgment, for He will hereafter send Him to judge, and who shall abide His Coming? Dost thou not see them cast to the wild beasts, that they may deny the Lord, and are not overcome? And that the more numerous their persecutors, so much the more do they increase? These things do not appear like the works of men; these things are the power of God; these things are the proof of His Presence.”¹

Justin’s new profession entailed upon him new duties, as well as giving greater force and impulse to all others. Vice of all kinds was held in far greater abhorrence by the faithful than by any of the heathen. “We are taught, and believe, and are sure,” Justin says, “that they only are accepted of God who imitate the perfections of His Holy Nature—chastity, justice, humanity,” &c.²

It has been a matter of differing opinion whether Justin ever received the authority of the priesthood, or whether he remained a layman. It seems most probable that the latter was the case, as indeed we know that in all states of life it is in our power to serve God with the best we have, whether talents, power, or wealth;

¹ Epist. to Diogn.

² Apol. i. 10.

and that an unreserved self-devotion to the cause of religion may be shown as well by those who have not been bound by the vows of ordination, as by those who are consecrated priests of the Lord. For is not every baptized Christian bound with a vow nothing can ever undo, to become Christ's faithful soldier and servant, and manfully to fight under His Banner unto his life's end ?

Most probably Justin's eloquence and intellectual attainments were turned to the conversion of those amongst whom he found himself, who were yet in the darkness of heathen philosophy. Apparently he was endowed with considerable eloquence and persuasiveness,¹ and great would be the earnestness with which such a man would apply such noble gifts to the service of their Giver.

¹ Dial. Tryph. lviii.

CHAPTER II.

“ Blest are they,
Who gazing, trembling, patiently ascend
Treading beneath their feet all visible things,
As steps, that upward to their Father’s Thron
Lead gradual—else nor glorified nor loved.

• • • •
A soft solemn bliss
Swims in his eye, his swimming eye upraised ;
And Faith’s whole armour glitters on his limbs !
And thus transfigured with a dreadless awe,
A solemn hush of soul, meek he beholds
All things of terrible seeming.”

Coleridge.

THE FEARLESSNESS OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY—JUSTIN GOES
TO ROME—MARCION—JUSTIN’S APOLOGY—CONCERNING
CUSTOMS OF THE CHURCH—SIGN OF THE CROSS—HOLY
BAPTISM—THE EUCHARIST—PUBLIC WORSHIP—ALMS-
GIVING—THE EMPEROR’S LETTER TO THE ASSEMBLY OF
ASIA—JUSTIN, COMING TO THE EAST, MEETS TRYPHON THE
JEW AT EPHESUS—HE TRAVELS—RETURNS TO ROME—
HIS DISCIPLES—TATIAN—CRESCNES THE CYRIAC—THE
SECOND APOLOGY—PERSECUTION UNDER MARCUS AURE-
LIUS—JUSTIN IS ARRESTED WITH HIS DISCIPLES—THEIR
TRIAL—AND MARTYRDOM.

THUS pre-eminent in the ranks of Christianity,
Justin was well aware of the dangers to which
he was daily exposed, but he feared them not.

"We," he says, "rather than sacrifice to them to whom we formerly did sacrifice, do endure the most extreme punishments; and even in the agonies of death rejoice, most firmly believing that God will raise us up through Christ, and make us free from pain, incorruptible, and immortal."¹ And again: "It is evident that none can affright or terrify and bring under any of us who, throughout the whole world, believe in Jesus. For while we are under the agonies of death, under the tortures of the cross, are exposed to wild beasts, and punished with bonds, and fire, and every other kind of torment, it is certain that we do not depart from our profession. But by how much the more we are afflicted with such torments, by so much the more does the number of the faithful and true worshippers of God increase through the Name of Jesus."² His reasons for despising the terrors of persecution were his in common with all Christians. Writing to Diognetus, Justin says: "Thou wilt condemn the deceit and error of the world, when thou shalt have learned truly to live in heaven. When thou shalt despise what here seems death, when thou shalt fear the true death, which is reserved for those condemned to that everlasting fire which shall endlessly torment those delivered to it, then wilt thou admire those who suffer for righteousness, and wilt count the

¹ Dial. Tryph. xlvi.

² Ibid. ex.

fire they suffer blessed, when thou hast learned the other."

After a time Justin took up his abode at Rome, where he was constantly occupied in contending, both by word of mouth and by writing, against the heresies then prominent in the Church. His chief opponent was Marcion, a heretic of whom we have already had occasion to speak. S. Justin's work against heresies is not extant, but in his first *Apology* he mentions Marcion of Pontus, "who is even now teaching his followers to profess that there is some other god, greater than He who created the world. This man through the assistance of evil spirits, hath caused many in every nation to speak blasphemies, and to deny that the Creator of the universe was God : maintaining that some one else of superior power, hath exceeded that Creator by executing greater works."¹

We have already spoken concerning the successive dispositions of the Emperors towards the Christians ; it was with a hope of mitigating their sufferings and of removing some of the unjust obloquy thrown upon them, that Justin addressed his first *Apology* to Antoninus Pius and his sons. He begins by stating that he demands not favour, but merely a candid hearing and examination of the true character of the calumniated Faith. "We intreat," he says, "that the

¹ Apol. 35, translated by the Rev. Temple Chevallier.

charges against Christians may be examined; and if they be proved to be well founded, we are willing that they should be punished as they deserve, or even to punish them ourselves."¹ Justin then examines one by one the accusations laid against his brethren. Concerning their loyalty, he says: "Now ye, when ye hear that we look for a kingdom, assume without inquiry that we speak of a human kingdom; whereas we speak of that which is with God: as plainly appears from this, that when we are questioned by you, we confess that we are Christians, when we know that the punishment of death will be inflicted on all who confess. For if we expected a human kingdom, we should deny, that we might escape death; and should seek to remain concealed, that we might obtain what we expect. But since our hopes are not fixed upon this present world, we care not for our murderers, knowing that at all events we must die.

" Moreover, we aid and assist you to preserve peace, more than all other men; for we are firmly persuaded, that it is impossible that any man should escape the notice of God, whether he be an evil-doer, or covetous, or a virtuous man; and that every one shall go into everlasting punishment or happiness, according to that which his deeds deserve. For if all men knew this, no one would choose evil for a little time;

¹ Apol. 3.

knowing that he must go into eternal punishment by fire; but each would restrain himself, and adorn himself with all virtue, that so he might attain unto the good things which are of God, and be free from those torments. They who offend against the laws, and are exposed to the punishments which you impose, may endeavour to escape detection, knowing well that it is possible to elude the notice of human beings like yourselves. But if they had learned, and were well assured, that it is impossible for God not to know everything which is done, nay everything which is thought, they would by all means live circumspectly, if it were but to avoid the punishment hanging over their heads."¹

S. Justin proceeds to enlarge upon the system derived by the Christians from their Master and Head, quoting largely from His Precepts as to purity, brotherly love, forgiveness of injuries, liberality, gentleness, and truth, saying: "Now whosoever are found not to live as Christ taught them, let it be publicly known that they are not Christians, although they should profess with their tongue the doctrine of Christ. For He declared, that not they who only profess, but they who do His works, shall be saved. . . . And we even entreat, that those who live not agreeably to their doctrines, but are merely called Christians, may be punished by you."² He

¹ Apol. ii. 12.

² Apol. 22.

then proceeds to compare the hateful and profligate mythologic fables of heathen religion with the pure Faith of Christ, setting forth the prophecies concerning the Messiah, with their fulfilment—in the course of which we meet with a passage, full of interest to those whose delight is in tracing the form of the Holy Cross, emblem of man's Salvation, on all the objects which surround us. "Observe," he says, "how impossible it is that anything in the world should be regulated, or any mutual intercourse be carried on, without employing this figure. The sea cannot be navigated, unless this symbol, at the mast and yard-arm of the sail, remains firm in the ship. Without an instrument in this form, the land cannot be ploughed; neither can they who dig exercise their labour, nor handicraft men pursue their occupations, without implements which are fashioned in like manner. The human figure also differs from those of irrational animals in this respect, that it is erect, and hath the hands extended."¹

In the primitive Church not only was the Holy Symbol discovered in every natural, and in most artificial objects, but it was the ever-repeated sign with which Christians loved to mark their membership, and with which they sanctified all the events in life. In Holy Baptism,² in the Holy Eucharist,³ in the ordi-

¹ Apol. 72.

² Bingh. bk. ii.

³ Bk. xv. 3.

nation of clergy,¹ the sign of the cross formed a part of the ceremonial. In prayer the most esteemed attitude was with the hands folded, so as to represent that sacred form,² the Blessed Body in the Lord's Supper was received in the right hand, so placed across the left as to make this sign ; and further, all the common events of daily life were by the faithful consecrated and dedicated to their Crucified Master by it, thereby also reminding themselves Whose they were, and what the obligations they, as bearers of the Cross, were under. Tertullian says: "In all our travels and movements, in all our coming in and going out, in putting on our shoes, at the bath, at the table, in lighting our candles, in lying down, in sitting down, whatever employment occupieth us, we mark our forehead with the sign of the Cross."³ And a little later S. Cyril: "Let us not be ashamed of the Cross of Christ, but though another hide it, do thou openly seal it on thy brow; that the devils beholding that princely sign, may flee far away trembling. But make thou this sign, when thou eatest and drinkest, sittest or liest down, risest up, speakest, walkest; in a word, on every occasion: for He Who was here Crucified is above in the Heavens."⁴ And S. Chrysostom: "From earliest life encompass thy children with spiritual armour, and instruct them

¹ Bingh. bk. ii. 19. ² Bk. xiii. 8.—Tertul. Apol. 30.

³ De Coron. 8. ⁴ Catech. Lec. iv. 9.

to seal the forehead with the hand ; and before they are able to do this with their own hand, do you imprint upon them the Cross."¹

There are some within the bosom of our Church who would all but reject this blessed Symbol, in its outward and visible form, making it over, as it were, exclusively to one branch of the Catholic Church. Let them consider, ere they refuse to sober and strengthen their faith by gazing on that sacred emblem, so peculiarly the Christian's sign, whether they do wisely to banish, as dangerous and liable to abuse, that which in the primitive Church was thus treated ; not set aside as liable to mislead, by placing the Christian's thoughts below Him Who for them hung thereon, but rather by tracing it on all sides and everywhere, the more to raise their thoughts to Him Who died and rose again ; and reaching on from the bodily vision which in all things animate and inanimate strove to distinguish the hallowing form, to trace it in every path whether of joy or sorrow, in which their footsteps were led, and to rest satisfied with nothing whereon that solemn consecrating Form did not cast its oftentimes bitter, but always precious shade.

S. Justin likewise gives us a most valuable account of the manner in which certain holy ceremonies of the Church were conducted. Concerning

¹ Hom. in Cor. xii. 14.

Baptism, he says: "As many as are persuaded and believe that the things that we teach and declare are true, and promise that they are determined to live accordingly, are taught to pray, and to beseech God with fasting, to grant them remission of their past sins,¹ while we also pray and fast with them. We then lead them to a place where there is water, and there they are regenerated in the same manner as we also were: for they are then washed in that water, in the Name of God the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christ said: 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the

¹ In the early Church fasting and confession of sins have always been included in the discipline of catechumens or candidates for Holy Baptism. See Bingham, Antiq. bk. x. chap. 2. s. 9. No solemn or important duty or undertaking was entered upon by the Primitive Christians without the preparation of fasting, which, while (with its accompaniments of prayer, almsgiving, and confession) it purified the mind from worldly cares and thoughts, also enabled it to rise to Heaven with a purer, more fervent life and love. These observances were not undertaken as an end in themselves; on the contrary, the very fact of their being always used as *preparatory* to some further act, proves that they were intended to cleanse, to invigorate, and fortify the soul, just as in daily life we use food and exercise for the same objects as regards the body. They are not *ends* in that case, the end is the increased and constantly-supplied strength of our members for their daily duties, and if unusual effort is required, we seek to acquire unusual strength.

Kingdom of Heaven.' The Apostles have also taught us for what reason this new birth is necessary. Since, at our first birth, we were born without our knowledge or consent, and even brought up in bad habits, in order that we may no longer remain the children of necessity or ignorance, but may become the children of choice and judgment, and may obtain in the water remission of the sins which we before have committed, the Name of God the Father and Lord of the universe is pronounced over him who is willing to be born again, and hath repented of his sins : he who leads him to be washed in the laver of Baptism saying this over him. And this washing is called illumination, since the minds of those who are thus instructed are enlightened." He continues : " We then, after having so washed him who hath expressed his conviction and professes the Faith, lead him to those who are called brethren, where they are gathered together, to make common prayers with great earnestness, both for themselves and for him who is now enlightened, and for all others in all places ; that having learned the truth, we may be deemed worthy to be found men of godly conversation in our lives, and to keep the commandments, that so we may attain to eternal salvation. When we have finished our prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. After which there is brought to him who presides, bread, and a cup of wine

mixed with water.¹ And he having received them, gives praise and glory to the Father of all things, through the Name of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and gives thanks in many words for that God hath vouchsafed to them these things. And when he hath finished his praise and thanksgiving, all the people who are present express their assent, saying Amen, which in the Hebrew tongue implies, So be it. The president having given thanks, and the people having expressed their assent, those whom we call deacons give to each of those who are present a portion of the bread which hath been blessed, and of the wine mixed with water, and carry some away for those who are absent.² And this food is called by us the Eucharist or Thanksgiving; of which no one may partake unless he believes that what we teach is true, and is washed in the laver, which is appointed for the forgive-

¹ It was very generally the custom of the early Church thus to mix the wine of the Chalice with water, typifying the Blood and Water which were shed from the Saviour's Side. See Bingham, Eccles. Anti. bk. viii. 6, and xv. s.

² There was no ecclesiastical rule against consecrating the Holy Elements in the private houses of the sick or dying, which indeed was frequently done; but it was more usual to send to them a part of that which was consecrated in the church by the hands of the deacons, and in the time of danger and persecution, most priests reserved a portion of the consecrated elements ready to administer to such of the faithful as might suddenly be placed in jeopardy of their lives.

ness of sins and unto regeneration, and lives in such a manner as Christ commanded. For we receive not these elements as common bread or common drink. But even as Christ Jesus our Saviour, being made Flesh by the Word of God, had both Flesh and Blood for our salvation ; even so we are taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of the Word which came from Him,—by the conversion of which (into our bodily substance) our blood and flesh are nourished,—is the Flesh and Blood of that Jesus Who was made Flesh. For the Apostles, in the memoirs related by them, which are called Gospels, have related that Jesus thus commanded them, that having taken bread and given thanks, He said : “ Do this in remembrance of Me,” and that in like manner having taken the cup and given thanks, he said: “ This is my Blood,” and that he distributed them to these alone. . . After these solemnities are finished, we afterwards continually remind one another of them ; and such of us as have possessions assist all those who are in want, and we all associate with one another. And over all our offerings we bless the Creator of all things, through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit. And on the day which is called Sunday, there is an assembly in one place of all who dwell either in towns or in the country ; and the memoirs of the Apostles, or the writings of the Prophets are read, as long as the time permits. Then

when the reader hath ceased, the president delivers a discourse, in which he reminds and exhorts them to the imitation of all these good things. We then all stand up together, and put forth prayers. Then as we have already said,¹ when we cease from prayer, bread is brought, and wine and water, and the president in like manner offers up prayers and praises with his utmost power, and the people express their assent by saying Amen. The consecrated elements are then distributed and received by every one; and a portion is sent by the deacons to those who are absent. Each of those, also, who have abundance and are willing, according to his choice, gives what he thinks fit, and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the fatherless and the widows, and those who are in necessity from disease or any other cause; those also who are in bonds, and the strangers who are sojourning amongst us, and in a word, takes care of all who are in need. We all of us assemble together on Sunday, because it is the first day in which God changed darkness and matter, and made the world. On the same day also, Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead."²

To this elaborate justification of the true Faith, which so boldly disclosed all its doctrines, some

¹ When describing Comm. after Baptism.

² Apol. 77-85-90.

ecclesiastical historians have assigned so great an effect upon the Emperor as to produce his famous letter to the Assembly of Asia.

" I know indeed that the gods themselves will take care that such men as these shall not escape detention. For it would more properly belong to them to punish those that will not worship them than to you. And whilst you drive them into a tumult, you only confirm them the more in their mind, by accusing them as atheists, for to them, it will be more desirable when arraigned, to appear to die for their God, than to live. Whence also, they may come off in triumph, when they yield up their lives in preference to a conformity with those things which you exact of them. But as to those earthquakes which have taken place, and still continue, it is not out of place to admonish you who are cast down whenever these happen, to compare your own deportment with theirs. They, indeed, become on these occasions so much the more cheerful towards God! but you, the whole of this time in which you seem besides yourselves, neglect both the gods and other duties, especially the worship of the Immortal. But the Christians who worship Him, you expel and persecute to death. Respecting these, however, many of the governors of the provinces also wrote to our most divine father. To whom also, he wrote in reply, not to trouble them at all, unless they appeared to make attempts against the Roman

government. Many also have sent communications to me respecting them, to whom also, I wrote in reply, following the course pursued by my father. But if any still persevere in creating difficulties to any one of these because he is of this description (a Christian), let him that is thus arraigned be absolved of crime, although he should appear to be such, but let the accuser be held guilty.¹

Thus usefully was Justin occupied at Rome, where according to Eusebius he was one of the most noted men of his time, under the guise of a philosopher preaching the Truth of God.²

From Rome, Justin returned to his native East; it was at Ephesus that he met with Tryphon, the most distinguished and well known Jew of that day,³ a man who having lived some time at Corinth, was accomplished in all polite heathen literature, and no mean opponent of Christianity. He seems to have sought a discussion with Justin, who was probably a marked man amongst all such as pretended to any general knowledge of literary men and things. Tryphon and his companions accordingly accosted the Christian philosopher, hoping, as they said, to derive benefit from him, and declaring themselves to be seeking after true philosophy.⁴ Justin immediately inquired

¹ Euseb. iv. 13. ² Ibid. iv. 11. ³ Ibid. iv. 18.

⁴ Dialog. Tryph. translated by the Rev. H. Brown, 1745.

whether they expected to derive as much profit from the speculations of philosophy as from the Law and the Prophets? Tryphon replied that they surely might, asking whether all philosophy did not tend to search into the Nature of the Deity? To which Justin replied that "most of the philosophers are entirely regardless whether there be one, or many gods, and whether their providential care is exercised over every one of us or not, as if the knowledge of these things was not at all conducive to our happiness. Moreover, they maintain a general, but deny a special Providence; from whence they infer that it is not necessary for us daily to address God in prayer. For what end they inculcate this doctrine it is easy to say; for a liberty of teaching, or of being followers of those who propagate such notions, permits men to speak and act as best suits their own inclinations, without dreading any punishment, or expecting any reward, at the Hand of God. For how should they be influenced either with hope or fear, who believe and assert that things will be hereafter as they now are?—that each of us shall live in the next life just as we do in this? and that there will be no alteration in us either for the better or the worse? But some, who maintain that the soul is immortal and incorporeal, think what sin soever they commit, they cannot be punished, because whatsoever is incorporeal is incapable of pain, and

if the soul is immortal, they have no farther favour to ask of God."¹

Justin then proceeded to narrate the history of his own unsatisfied wanderings from one school of philosophy to another, and his final conversion to Christianity; telling his listeners that peace and consolation are to be found there only, and that if they desire salvation and love God, they should hasten to know Christ, and be baptized into His Church. But the learned Jews derided such teaching, and told Justin that if, instead of believing an idle story concerning an imaginary Messiah, for Whose Sake they forfeited all the pleasures of this life, and rushed headlong into all manner of dangers, they would obey the precepts of the Law, it would fare much better with them, both for time and eternity.² Justin then entered into an able and lengthened discussion concerning the Law and the Gospel, in which he showed a most thorough and minute acquaintance with the writings of the Prophets, as well as with the Scriptures of the Christians; showing Tryphon how much the Jews misinterpret the law of Moses, and refuse to hearken to its full meaning. Thus he says, "Ye have despised and set at nought the new and holy covenant of which Isaías wrote (Isa. lv. 3-5), and you do not even now receive it, nor repent of your evil deeds. 'For your ears are still

¹ Dial. i.

² Ibid. viii.

heavy, your eyes shut, and your heart is made fat.' (Isa. vi. 10.) The Lawgiver is come, but ye see Him not: the poor have the Gospel preached unto them, the blind receive their sight, and ye do not understand: ye have need of another circumcision, though ye boast greatly of that which is in the flesh. This new law teaches you to observe a perpetual Sabbath: and ye, when ye have spent one day in idleness, think ye have discharged the duties of religion, not well considering to what end this command was given you; and if ye have eaten unleavened bread, ye say that ye have fulfilled the Will of God; but with such things as these the Lord our God is not well pleased. If any one amongst you is guilty of perjury or theft, let him repent and be clean, and then he hath kept the true and acceptable Sabbath unto God."¹

Justin goes on to prove that Isaiah prophesied of holy baptism, "which water of life can alone purify those that repent." He then goes through the ceremonies of the Law, as typical of Christianity, and shows how the various prophecies concerning the Messiah were fulfilled in our Blessed Lord. Justin seems to have a peculiar delight in all types of the most Holy Cross, which he finds not only in Moses' stretched out hands, when Israel prevailed over Amalek (Exod. xvii. 9), and in the brazen

¹ Dial. xii.

serpent, but in the blessing of Joseph (Deut. xxxiii. 18), where in the horns of the unicorn he sees the foreshadowing of the Cross; and in Moses' rod (Exod. iv. 7; xiv. 16-21; xvii. 5-6; and xv. 28-25), in Jacob's staff (Gen. xxxii. 10), in Elisha's stick (2 Kings vi.), and many other passages of the Old Testament.

The Christian spirit of gentleness and brotherly love is kept up throughout this argument, as may be seen from the following passage, where, after saying that the Synagogues curse all bearing the Christian name, Justin proceeds: "To all whom we say, Ye are our brethren, and we wish that you may arrive at the knowledge of the divine truth. And when we cannot prevail by our intreaties, but you earnestly endeavour to force us to deny the Name of Christ, we choose rather to endure the greatest hardships, even death itself; being fully persuaded that God will certainly give us all those good things which He has promised us through CHRIST. And notwithstanding we are thus injuriously treated by you, we pray for you, that Christ would have mercy upon you; for He has taught us to pray even for our very enemies, saying, 'Love your enemies,'" &c.¹

The discussion lasted two days, at the end of which Justin set sail from Ephesus, receiving kindly farewells from Tryphon and his com-

¹ Dial. xcvi.

panions, who owned that they had learned much from their Christian opponent; and they besought him to remember them as friends. Justin offered up a prayer in their behalf, and told them he could wish them no greater blessing, than that God would vouchsafe to them His Light, that they might stedfastly believe in Jesus, the Christ of God.¹

It has been supposed by some that Justin travelled from place to place as a missionary.² This must remain uncertain. At all events he certainly visited various countries; and no doubt one so penetrated as he was with the beauty and grandeur of that Faith, through which alone he looked for salvation, would everywhere and in all places seek to lead men to that "Mighty and Glorious Rock Which sends Its living water into the hearts of those who through Him love the Father of all things, and gives drink to those that thirst after the Water of Life."³

But we are approaching the termination of his earthly travels, when his summons came for the "longest and the last." Once more Justin returned to Rome, where notwithstanding his great reputation, he persevered in living a life of the utmost retirement and tranquillity, occupied with the instruction of those who were attracted by his fame to become his disciples. Amongst

¹ Dial. cxlii.

² Tillemont, Vie de S. Just. ar. x.

³ Dial. Tryph. cxiv.

these was Tatian, who so long as Justin lived, was a faithful Christian: but after his master's death wanting ballast to steady a self-sufficient, over-confident mind, he became a heretic, and promulgated various most ungodly doctrines.¹

Amongst the numerous enemies of Christianity to be found in Rome, Crescens a Cynic philosopher, stood pre-eminent. He was a learned and accomplished man, but of an avaricious and depraved character. "He who advised others to despise death," says Tatian, "was himself in so much dread of it, that he procured it for Justin, as though it had been a great evil."²

Justin was aware of Crescens' enmity, for in his Second Apology (which was probably his last work) he says: "I also expect to be waylaid and put to the rack, even by Crescens himself, that unphilosophical and vainglorious opponent. For it seems not proper to call a man a philosopher, who publicly attempts to contend against matters that he does not understand, as if Christians were infidels and wicked characters, merely for the purpose of captivating and gratifying the multitude. . . . For if he

¹ Euseb. iv. 29.

² Ibid. iv. 16. Tatian compiled a Diatessaron of the four Gospels, mutilating them so as to serve his own purposes; and this work had an extensive circulation before its errors were clearly perceived. Theodoret found two hundred copies in the churches of his diocese.—Tillemont, Des Encratites.

counteract us without having read the doctrines of Christ, he is most iniquitous in his conduct, and much worse than common men, who for the most part are cautious in speaking and bearing a false testimony in matters with which they are not acquainted ; and if when happening to read, he does not understand the sublimity of them, or if understanding, he does those things which may lead one to suspect he is not one of them (no Christian), he is so much the more base and nefarious, inasmuch as he is enslaved to vulgar applause and fear. When I proposed certain questions to him, I found him ignorant. . . . he is not a true lover of wisdom, but a lover of vain glory.”¹

This Second Apology was written in consequence of the cruel persecution which arose under Marcus Aurelius in Rome, where a heathen husband accused one Ptolemy of being a Christian and having converted his wife. Ptolemy denied neither charge ; and with several others suffered martyrdom.

S. Justin’s appeal to the earthly throne was unavailing, but it reached the Throne of Him Who reigneth over the kings of the earth, and it pleased Him to put the seal upon the faith and devotion of His servant by bringing persecution upon him personally.

Accordingly Justin and several of his disciples

¹ Euseb. iv. 16.

were arrested, and brought before Rusticus the præfect. When they reached the tribunal, Rusticus addressed Justin as their leader, desiring him to obey the Emperor's law, and offer sacrifice to the gods. Firmly though respectfully, Justin answered that his obedience to the law of his Heavenly Master was paramount, and that whoso obeyed Him should never be condemned.

The præfect inquired what was his profession ?

"I have studied all manner of philosophy," Justin answered, "and have sought all science and knowledge in vain ; now I profess only the true Christian doctrine, little as its discipline is loved by those who know it not."

"Unhappy man !" said Rusticus, "followest thou that doctrine ? What is that discipline ?"

"The sense of the Christian Faith," he replied, "is to worship One God, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and all things visible and invisible, and the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, Whose Coming was foretold by His Prophets, Who shall come again to judge all men, and Who Alone can give salvation to all who are His faithful servants. Far be it from me to pretend to speak fitly of His Infinite Greatness or of His Divinity. But His inspired Prophets have spoken concerning it."

Rusticus demanded where the Christians assembled together ?

"Whithersoever they can," Justin replied ;

"thinkest thou that we are unable to worship everywhere? Our God is Invisible and Immortal, the whole heaven and earth are full of His Presence, and wheresoever His people gather together, there He will surely be found of them."

The præfect then inquired where Justin held his school?

"At the Timothean baths, near the Campus Martius. For the second time I inhabit Rome; and I have always been ready to instruct whosoever sought me."

"Finally then," said Rusticus, "thou art a Christian?" Once more the prisoner answered that he was.

Rusticus then turned to Caritas and Carita, who both professed through God's Grace to hold the same faith as Justin had declared. Evelyptus, the next examined, declared himself to be a slave of the Emperor, but in Christ a freeman, and sharing the same full and free promises as his companions. Two more, Hierax and Pæon, then professed themselves also Christians. The prætor asked by whom they had been instructed in their creed? Hierax made answer that he had always been, and ever should be, a Christian; and Pæon, that from his parents he received his holy Faith. Evelyptus said the same; adding that he had joyfully received the instructions of Justin. Rusticus inquired of Hierax where his parents were?

"Christ is my Father, and the Faith of His Church my Mother," answered the martyr; "my earthly parents are dead; I was brought hither from Lycaonia in Phrygia."

Yet one prisoner, Liberianus, remained, and when he too had confessed himself a Christian, the *præfect* once more turned to Justin: "Thou art famous for thine eloquence," he said; "and thou believest thyself to be a follower of true philosophy; does thy philosophy enable thee to believe that when I shall have caused thee to be mangled from head to foot, thou shalt soar up to Heaven?"

"Of a truth," Justin answered, "whatsoever thou shalt make me to endure, I fear not but I shall attain to that which is promised to those who obey the Word of God, for I know that He loveth eternally those who love Him."

"Thou thinkest then," said the *præfect*, "that thou shalt ascend to Heaven, and there be recompensed for all that thou hast suffered here?"

"I *think* it not," was the unshaken reply, "but I *know* it of an absolute certainty."

Rusticus grew impatient. "Cease from such questions," he said; "I command you all to offer sacrifice to the gods."

The little band of Christians simultaneously turned to Justin as their leader, and he replied in the name of all: "Whoso knoweth the truth, and hath tasted the peace thereof, cannot aban-

don the holy Faith for a false and sacrilegious worship."

Rusticus reminded them of the tortures awaiting them if they yielded not. "We demand nothing better than to suffer for the Name of Jesus Christ," was Justin's reply; "such fortunes will work our salvation, and so we shall present ourselves with greater confidence before the awful tribunal of our Lord and Master, where one day, as He willeth, all must stand."

One and all spoke to the same effect, saying, "What thou doest, do quickly; we are Christians, and we cannot sacrifice unto idols."

Rusticus then finding them guilty of contempt of the imperial commands, sentenced them to be scourged and then beheaded. Their hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord Whose Mercy endureth for ever, rose full and clear as they were led to the place of execution; nor was it hushed save in death,—soon to be begun again, a new song before our God Who sitteth upon the Throne, and the Lamb for ever.

"O ye Spirits and Souls of the Righteous, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever."

Some of the faithful bore away the lifeless bodies, and interred them with becoming reverence.

It was about the year 165, that Justin thus showed to all the world the truth of what he had often affirmed, that for the Blessed Name of Jesus,

all who were true Christians would joyfully lay down their lives. "His heart is established and will not shrink his heart standeth fast and believeth in the Lord."¹

Some branches of the Church Catholic commemorate Justin Martyr on June 1st; by all he must be remembered and revered as one who has left a noble example to succeeding generations,—that we should count all else of no price whatever, if so be we may win Christ.

¹ Ps. cxii. 7, 8.

S. IRENÆUS.

BISHOP AND MARTYR.

" From new-born Lyons oft thy memory turn'd
Unto the earlier east, and fondly yearn'd
For Polycarp and Smyrna, and the youth
Of grave Religion fair. But wakeful Truth
Within tradition's holy citadel
Kept watch, and her stamp'd treasures guarded well,
Her Apostolic store : thou by her light
Didst guide the bark amid the gathering night
Of heresies, and th' helm didst sternly hold,
Lifting a martyr's voice, serene and bold.
Would that again the city of the Rhone
Might break her Roman bonds, and thee her champion
own ! "

The Cathedral.

S. IRENÆUS.

CHAPTER I.

“ Oh why do wretched men so much desire
 To draw their dayes unto their utmost date,
 And do not rather wish them soone expire,
 Knowing the miserie of their estate,
 And thousand perils which them still awate,
 Tossing them like a boate amid the mayne,
 That everie hour they knocke at deathe’s gate !
 And he that happie seems and least in payne
 Yet is as nigh his end, as he that most doth playne.”

Faerie Queene, bk. iv. canto 3.

CHARACTER OF S. IRENÆUS—HIS BIRTH—S. POLYCARP HIS TEACHER—AND S. PAPIUS—ACCOMPANIES S. POLYCARP TO ROME—IS SENT TO LYONS—VETTIUS EPAGATHUS—SANATUS AND MATORUS—BIBLIAS—ATTALUS—ALEXANDER—BLANDINA—PONTICUS—BISHOP POTINUS—HUMILITY OF THE CONFESSOR.

FEW of the Fathers of the Church Catholic have been commemorated with such universal love, esteem, and veneration, as S. Irenæus; nor is it a matter of surprise to us, for amongst the many holy men who followed hard upon the Apostles’

footsteps, none were more eminent than he, in all those qualities which win the admiration both of the children of the world, and of the children of light. In him were united the powerful grasping mind, and the profound learning of the heathen philosopher, with the submissive child-like faith of the Christian ; the utmost decision and vigour, with a truly apostolic charity ; the undaunted courage of the martyr, with the mildness and tenderness of a loving and faithful pastor, over the persecuted and distracted flock of Christ.

Accordingly we find S. Irenæus spoken of as a saint, a venerable man of God;¹ an apostolic man, most learned and eloquent;² the blessed successor of the Apostles, a holy and happy servant of God, granted to the Church by the Holy Spirit, as an invincible defender of the truth, his faith pure, and enlightened with heavenly light;³ an admirable man, the star of Gaul and of the West;⁴ the illustrious Irenæus, following close upon the holy Apostles;⁵ interpreter of the Church's doctrine;⁶ most excellent in holiness, well-known for his highly-finished writings, so full of solidity and truth, having penetrated into the depths of all science.⁷

In the midst of all the trials and perplexities of the early Christians, it pleased God, in His

¹ S. Augustine. ² S. Jerome. ³ S. Epiphanius.
⁴ Theodoret. ⁵ S. Basil. ⁶ S. Cyril. ⁷ Tertullian.

Mercy, to raise up such men as these, to be the Fathers of His infant Church; men, who devoted themselves and all their energies with an entire oneness of purpose to their work, as His servants, seeking not to go beyond the allotted tasks to which they were called, and select their own path, but so fully grasping and realizing that all the things of this world become valuable and important, solely in so far as they regard the greater things of the world to come, that earthly possessions and honours faded into insignificance to their view, and they watching for their Lord, and labouring with heart, head, and hands, as knowing neither the day nor the hour when He should come, were indeed blessed when He came, and found them so doing.

S. Irenæus is supposed to have been a native of Smyrna, and to have been born about the year A.D. 120. There is reason to believe that he was the child of Christian parents, and himself from the first brought up a Christian pupil. Probably his principal and earliest teaching in the mysteries of the Faith was derived from the lips of S. Polycarp, under whose instructions, Irenæus himself tells us, he was so happy as to be placed, while yet a boy. Apparently even then his studious, thoughtful character, was formed, for he says that he noted down the words of sacred wisdom which dropped from his saintly master, not on paper, but on the

tablets of his heart, dwelling and feeding upon them, till his whole soul was penetrated with the living spirit of that blessed Faith, which had power to win for both master and pupil the crown of martyrdom.

The lessons of truth come with tenfold force from lips we love; we realize Divine Love then most truly when our own souls hang in deep reverential love on him who leads our minds to know It; our hearty and trusting confidence in his word and wisdom conducts us on to the full and entire Faith which God requires of us, for the protecting and confiding bonds between the spiritual father and his child, are surely no faint type of that fullest of all love, graciously permitted and required of us, towards Him, the Father of all; and thus holy things become bound up with our best and purest thoughts and feelings, and are enshrined in the memory with a force, frequently defying all time or absence, which will chase the less profound remembrances of youth from the mind, as though they had never been. So it was with Irenæus. Late in life he remembered all the particulars of this his happy childhood, with a vividness long since passed from later occurrences, even to the actions and attitudes of his beloved master, the very words and expressions with which he spoke of holy subjects, and how he loved to dwell upon the intimate knowledge he had had of S. John, the chosen disciple and friend of our Blessed

Lord Himself.¹ Many precious deeds and words of His, the Son of God, now lost to us, would probably thus reach the devout ears of the young Irenæus, for it was S. Polycarp's master who wrote—"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."² We can scarcely marvel if such early training nourished the truth-loving, earnest-minded boy into the future Bishop and martyr.

It is said by S. Jerome that Irenæus was also the pupil of S. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, and as he was the intimate friend of S. Polycarp, and like him the disciple of S. John, it is highly probable that the pupil of the one may have received the instruction of the other. Whilst thus "growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,"³ Irenæus was also advancing in all intellectual cultivation, as is apparent from his extensive and correct acquaintance with the writings, not only of the most popular and well-known poets and philosophers, but also of those least generally studied. But whilst he armed himself with the weapons of worldly knowledge, and the shield of all sacred and holy learning, Irenæus was not

¹ See Life of S. Polycarp. ² S. John xxi. 25.

³ S. Peter iii. 17.

unmindful of the Apostolic injunction to add to knowledge temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity, and so he went on his course, being neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Irenæus must have remained for some time in the happy condition of being taught and guided by his venerable master, for he accompanied S. Polycarp on the occasion of his journey to Rome during the episcopate of Anicetus, concerning the Quarto-deciman controversy.¹ Whilst there, Irenæus was commissioned, probably by the joint authority of S. Polycarp and Anicetus to travel as far as Gaul, where the Church was suffering much division and distraction, from the numerous heresies which sprang up. They rightly judged that Irenæus' great talents, together with his vigorous and conciliatory temper, would be very valuable to the aged and venerable Pothinus, Bishop of Lyons. At the hands of this Bishop, Irenæus received Holy Orders, and continuing in the quiet practice of his priestly duties we hear nothing especial concerning him, until the year 177, when the attention of all the Catholic Church was called to the Gallican branch, by reason of the cruel persecutions it then underwent. The Church at Lyons was pre-eminent for its piety and holiness, and at last, unable

¹ See Life of S. Polycarp.

patiently to witness such continuance in well-doing, the heathen populace rose up madly, and vented the most furious, implacable rage upon all bearing the name of Christian. We have a full and graphic description of this bloody persecution, in a letter sent by the Churches of Lyons and Vienne, to those of Asia and Phrygia. It is supposed to have been written by Irenæus himself. "The greatness indeed of the tribulation," thus it runs, "and the extent of the madness exhibited by the heathen against the saints, and the sufferings which the martyrs endured in this country, we are not able fully to declare, nor is it indeed possible to describe them; for the adversary assailed us with his whole strength, giving us a prelude how unbridled his future movements among us would be. And, indeed, he resorted to every means to accustom and exercise his own servants against those of God, so that we should not only be excluded from houses, and baths, and markets, but everything belonging to us was prohibited from appearing in any place whatever. But the Grace of God contended for us, and rescued the weak, and prepared those who, like firm pillars, were able through patience to sustain the whole weight of the enemy's violence against them. These coming in close conflict, endured every species of reproach and torture; esteeming what was deemed great, but little, they hastened to Christ, showing in reality that 'the sufferings of this

time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.”¹

This regular systematic persecution by the imperial authorities was heralded by the unrestrained violence with which the populace attacked the Christians, driving them from the baths, the markets, and all places of public resort, committing the grossest depredations on their property unchecked, and finally assailing them with blows and violence; so that they could scarcely appear in the streets of the city without the risk of being stoned. But all this the Christians bore in patience, remembering Who had left with them His Word: “Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s Sake; rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold, your reward is great in Heaven.”²

At last some of the most conspicuous of the faithful were taken prisoners, and brought before the governor to be examined. The forum was filled with spectators; amongst these was Vettius Epagathus, of the noble Roman family of the Vettii, one of the most illustrious citizens in Lyons. He was in heart one of the proscribed sect; though young in years, his noble uprightness of heart, the purity of his life, and his absorbing

¹ Euseb. v. i.

² Luke vi. 22, 23.

love of God, which overflowed (as it must ever do where it is such as alone is “born of God and knoweth God”)¹ with love to all mankind; these qualities won for him a comparison with Zacharias. “He had walked,” so the Acts say, “in all the commandments and righteousness of the Lord, blameless, full of love to God and his neighbour.”² Indignant at the injustice and oppression with which his brethren were treated, Vettius broke forth with a loud voice, and demanded a hearing, that he might prove the falsity of the charges brought against the Christians. There was great displeasure amongst the authorities at this conduct, for they deemed it unworthy of so eminent a man; and the governor, instead of hearkening to him, inquired whether he too was a Christian? Vettius boldly and unhesitatingly replied that he was, upon which the noble champion was instantly handed over to the guards, to share in the sufferings of those he vainly sought to protect; he being meanwhile so strong in the power of love and grace, that he gloried in his condemnation, whilst the prisoners hailed him as their faithful advocate.

This was but the beginning of sorrows. Now the time of trial was really come, and soon it would be proved who, truly and from their heart, had devoted themselves to the service of their Lord, and were ready to carry out, even to death,

¹ S. John iv. 7.

² Euseb. v. 1.

the bold professions they had made, and who had been over-weaning in their self-confidence, and now would yield and fall away. Not many such were there ; some ten only amongst the brethren, over whom more bitter tears were shed, than over such as expired in the midst of cruel torments. It was an awful, appalling time, not less for those who were yet at large, than for the prisoners themselves ; for the former were constantly with their captive brethren, ministering, as far as in them lay, to their wants, both temporal and spiritual, and looking incessantly for their own turn to come ; since those that were “worthy to fill up the number of the martyrs,”¹ were from day to day being seized and added to the number of the captives. It was a “dying daily” in truth. But the fear which pressed heaviest of them all was, lest any should yield under the extremity of bodily suffering, and fall away, thereby losing the crown of glory which was already hung up, as it were, in sight of each of them, could they but press forward a little longer without faltering. A new impulse was given to the persecution, by the false confessions of some heathen slaves, who being put to the torture, endeavoured to save themselves, by accusing their Christian masters of the most horrid crimes, till even those very heathens, who had been hitherto restrained by numbering

¹ Euseb. v. 1.

friends and kinsmen amongst the accused sect, now joined the common outcry, and the whole populace burst into a perfect frenzy of rage, only to be appeased by feasting their eyes upon sufferings which would be too horrible to relate, were it not to set forth the Infinite, Abundant Grace, Which made them all endurable, and gave even to weak delicate women and young children, strength to persevere to the end ; “the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, and knowing what is the hope of His Calling, and what the riches of the glory of His Inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His Power to those who believe.”¹

Amongst those against whom the fiercest fury of the people was directed, were Sanctus, a deacon of Vienne ; Maturus, a recent, but sincere and faithful convert ; Attalus, a native of Pergamus, one of the noblest children of that Church ; and Blandina, a slave. This woman was particularly delicate and feeble, and her mistress, who herself was one of the Christian captives, dreaded lest she should be altogether overpowered, and yield to bodily weakness ; but God’s Strength is made perfect in weakness, and Blandina came to the hour of trial with a power of endurance and holy courage equalling, if not surpassing, all her companions. Not one, but many deaths were inflicted upon her, torment

¹ Ephes. i. 18.

followed upon torment, until the very executioners marvelled how life could cling with such tenacity to so feeble a frame. Blandina the while, ceased not to profess her faith in Him, Who bore such pangs as none even of His martyred servants can ever know, and in His Name she found "rest, refreshment, and relief from pain."¹ Her words, incessantly repeated amidst all her sufferings, have become almost a Christian proverb, "We are Christians, of us is no evil done." Would that we could in any way venture in these days to inscribe such a legend on our shields!

After cruel sufferings, Blandina was sent back to her dungeon, and the general attention was directed to the deacon Sanctus. He was tempted with all manner of questioning, the authorities seeking to draw from him some doubting or unguarded expressions, which might bring obloquy on the Christian cause, but to all these questions Sanctus returned no other reply than the declaration, "I am a Christian;" esteeming this, says the narrative, as his name, his kindred, and his country. Unmurmuring, he bore the most excruciating agonies, the fires of his persecutors being extinguished to him by the fountain of Living Water, from whence soft drops descended as in a celestial shower upon his soul. He seemed to be held forth as an example to his

¹ Euseb. v. 1.

fellow-sufferers, that “there is nothing terrific where the Love of the Father, nothing painful where the Glory of Christ, prevails.”

After several repetitions of the torture, Sanctus together with Maturus, was finally despatched in the amphitheatre. Next, a woman called Biblias was brought forward; she was one of those unhappy persons who, being overwhelmed with fear, had fallen from the Faith, and denied her Lord; and the persecutors now put her to the torture, hoping to make her confirm the accusations against the brethren already made by the heathen slaves. But Biblias was mercifully saved from her apostasy; for in the midst of her tortures, she awoke as it were out of the deep sleep of sin, to repentance, and to the overpowering consciousness that her earthly torment, however grievous and protracted, was but a feeble shadowing forth of the everlasting punishment prepared for those who forsook their Master. And so waxing bold in spirit, she fearlessly professed the Faith of Christ, and became a partaker of the martyrs’ lot—of their earthly sufferings, and of their heavenly reward.

There were others of the unstedfast, less happy in their end; for though they had denied their Faith, and thereby obtained a temporary release, they were soon imprisoned anew, and punished, like the faithful, with torture and death; so that, whilst those who had never swerved, “were refreshed with the joy of mar-

tyrdom, the hope of the promises, the Love of Christ, and the Spirit of the Father," the others were sadly tormented by their own conscience, so that the difference was obvious to all, in their very countenances, when they were led forth. For the one went on joyfully, much glory and grace being mixed in their faces, so that their bonds seemed to form noble ornaments, and like those of a bride, adorned with golden bracelets, and impregnated with the sweet odour of Christ, they appeared as though anointed with earthly perfumes; but the others, with downcast looks, dejected, sad, and covered with every kind of shame, in addition to this were reproached by the brethren as mean and cowardly, bearing the charge of murderers, and losing the honourable, glorious, and life-giving appellation of Christians.¹

But so much the more did the faithful appear to be confirmed and strengthened in their holy fortitude. Numbers perished each day in the unhealthy, suffocating prisons, which were so crowded, that to many the change from the fresh air and light brought a speedy and comparatively easy death.

On the same day that Sanctus and Maturus were delivered from their agonies, Blandina and Attalus were brought forth again into the amphitheatre. It was a day appointed for various brutal exhibitions, both of gladiators and combats with wild beasts.

¹ Euseb. v. 1.

For a long time Blandina was suspended to a stake, within reach of the wild beasts, where, folding her arms crosswise, and reverently likening her painful position to Christ's Sufferings on the Holy Cross, she continued to pray fervently for all whose hour of need was now at hand; and many a martyr, whose death-struggle ended long ere her's did, received new courage for the bitter moment, when he saw what peace and strength were granted to her. But none of the wild beasts touched the virgin martyr, and she was once more denied a termination to her trials, and sent back to prison. Then the populace loudly demanded Attalus. He was a distinguished well known man, and now came forward as calmly and collectedly, as if he were but appearing in an ovation, and all the savage bystanders who thronged the forum, were assembled there to do him honour, instead of thirsting for his blood. He was paraded about the amphitheatre, a tablet being borne before him bearing the inscription: "This is Attalus the Christian." But the governor finding that he was a Roman, reserved him with some others, concerning whom application had been made to the Emperor. Meanwhile in prison Attalus was the means of reclaiming and strengthening many who through weakness, were ready to fall back. By means of such pious men as this, "much joy was created in the Church; for those who were as dead, she recovered again

as living. For the greater part of those that fell away, again retraced their steps, were again conceived, were again endued with vital heat, and learned to make confession of their faith."¹

There were many priests among the captives; indeed the aged Bishop of Lyons himself shared the dungeon of his flock; besides this those yet at liberty counted it their most special office to visit their brethren, so that there was no lack of consecrated hands at which to receive the ministry of reconciliation. Those must have been solemn Eucharistic festivals, when such as had faltered having been restored by the Church's absolution to Her communion, priests and people, old and young, the unshaken martyr and the restored penitent, knelt together, for the last time, to partake of that Body and Blood, Which would, by their Mysterious Power, give strength to the faithful to pass through the conflict which awaited him, and bring him to life everlasting.

At the conclusion of the great annual festival, those of the prisoners who were Romans, were brought forward to be beheaded, the privilege of their citizenship. Attalus bore renewed tortures first. He was accompanied by a Phrygian physician, named Alexander, who had for long been a true Christian; he never gave either sigh or groan, but in his heart so communed

¹ Euseb. v. 1.

with God, that he appeared unconscious of bodily pain.

Last of all, when the public games were at an end, the people being as yet unsatiated with blood, Blandina was dragged forth again, in company with a boy named Ponticus, who was probably her brother. He was but fifteen years of age, yet neither did his youth or Blandina's sex and feebleness, excite a moment's compassion in the brutal spectators; on the contrary, when they saw both resolutely refuse to bow before the heathen gods, they seemed to take a savage delight in heaping tortures upon them. Blandina encouraged the boy to endure all patiently, and he continued firm till death delivered him from his pangs. After all the other barbarities had been inflicted, Blandina was wrapped in a net, and exposed to a furious bull, which tossed her several times, and at last a tardy mercy ended her sufferings with the sword. "She, as a noble mother that had animated her children, and sent them as victors to the great king, herself retracing the ground of all the conflicts her children had endured, hastened at last, with joy and exaltation, to them, as to a marriage feast."¹

Even the heathen could not but marvel at, and admire, the constancy and fortitude of S. Blandina.

¹ Euseb. v. 1.

We have said that the venerable Bishop Pothinus was amongst the captives : he was past the age of ninety, and between years and suffering he was enfeebled in body to the last degree, yet his soul was ardent and bold as ever, and when his summons came to leave his dungeon (where he had wellnigh perished for lack of air and nourishment), he gathered together his remaining powers, ready to appear before the tribunal. He was carried thither by a band of armed soldiers, as though he had been a dangerous robber ; and like his Master, he might say, “Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves for to take me ?” A large and disorderly mob accompanied him to the magistrates. The governor scornfully asked him who was the God of the Christians ? “If thou be worthy, thou shalt know,” was Pothinus’s only answer. He was dragged away and cruelly scourged ; and the common people, losing all respect for either his station or his age, struck him, kicked him, and threw stones, and whatever missiles come to hand at him, till almost dead, he was cast back again into prison, where, after two days, it pleased God to take him to Himself.

Nor did the persecutors rest satisfied with the death of their victims, every possible insult was heaped upon the lifeless bodies, and the most watchful care was taken to prevent them from receiving the last offices of Christian burial.

"Where is their God?" they mockingly asked, "and what can that religion do now for them, which they preferred before life itself?" They knew not Who has said, "I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die?" and that He has promised, "the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."¹

Those who escaped with their lives yet endured many severe trials, both in themselves and in witnessing the tribulation of those they loved. Amongst these undoubtedly Irenæus is to be numbered; for the friend and coadjutor of Polchinus was not likely to escape. It was a special mercy of Almighty God preserving the life of one so able and efficient to watch over the Church in this her time of perplexity, when so much of her best heart's blood was shed. But he and the other eminent brethren who survived the persecution, were so lowly and humble-minded that they reproved those who called them martyrs, saying that "they are martyrs whom Christ has thought worthy to be received in their confession, setting the seal of their martyrdom by the issue; but we are but indifferent and mean confessors." And with tears did they entreat the brethren

¹ Is. li. 11, 12.

that they should offer up incessant prayers, that they might be made perfect. They exhibited indeed the power of martyrdom in fact, exercising much freedom in declaring themselves to all people, and manifesting their noble patience and fearless intrepidity, but the name of martyrs they declined receiving from the brethren, filled as they were with the fear of God."¹ Their deep and real humility was yet more heartily shown in their conduct towards those who had been less firm, and shown fear and shrinking. For these they displayed the "tenderness of a mother, pouring forth ceaseless prayers to the Father of all on their behalf."² With meekness and forbearance they reclaimed many a timid, and many an unsteady brother, and saved the holy Mother of all from many a wound, gathering all, as far as in them lay, into love and unanimity.

¹ Euseb. v. 2.

² Ibid.

CHAPTER II.

"Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast:
. . . . Nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

Samson Agonistes.

IRENÆUS SUCCEEDS POTHINUS AS BISHOP OF LYONS—HIS EPISCOPAL LABOURS—WRITES AGAINST HERESIES—HIS OTHER WRITINGS—RENEWAL OF THE QUARTODECIMAN CONTROVERSY—REIGN OF COMMODUS—PERTINAX SEVERUS—HIS EDICT OF PERSECUTION—ITS EFFECTS IN LYONS—MARTYRDOM OF S. IRENÆUS.

SUCH was the sorely tried condition of the Church of Lyons, when it was left without a spiritual head, by the martyrdom of the Bishop Pothinus. That Irenæus was the person next in authority and influence to him we may fairly suppose, from the manner in which he is mentioned by the martyrs, writing to Eleutherius, Bishop of Rome, in which after speaking of Irenæus as a "zealous follower of the covenant of Christ," they continue, "If we knew that any place could confer righteousness on any one, we would certainly commend him among the first as a presbyter of the Church, the station that

he holds."¹ It seemed in the natural course of events therefore, that Irenæus should be chosen to fill the vacant see, which probably gave him a sort of general superintendence over all the Churches in Gaul. So vigorous was his administration of the holy office, and so full of grace and power the Word of God as preached by him, that we are told he ere long converted nearly all the inhabitants of Lyons to Christianity.² From without Irenæus met with much difficulty; heresy in various shapes sprang up on all sides, and demanded all the resolute and unshaken energies, blended with patience and gentleness, for which this holy Bishop was conspicuous. His charity never seems to have faltered, whilst "hating the trespass most," he yet "loved the poor sinner," and would not have any to perish for want of perseverance on his part in trying to save them. "How" he says, "can our holy Mother Church do otherwise than weep over the promulgators of these preposterous absurdities? They have drawn upon themselves the calamities which come upon them. They know not how to grasp the fulness of truth, but for ever fall back into the darkness and void of falsehood; for the Holy Spirit Alone can lead to peace and rest. We desire most heartily that they should not remain in the pit which they have dug for themselves, but that they should

¹ Euseb. v. 4.² Ibid. v. 23.

leave the false home they have found, should come out of the abyss into which they are precipitated, and that they should be born again of Christ, brought into the bosom of the Church, and become the temples of Jesus Christ ; that they should acknowledge the Creator of the universe as the Only True God, and the Only Lord of all things. This is our heart's prayer for them. We have a more real desire for their welfare, than they have for themselves ; and if they would permit us, we would prove our love to be as useful as it is sincere. They esteem our charity to be harsh and severe, because we would take from them the venom of pride and vanity, and handle them as a surgeon his patient, when he cauterises his painful sores. But let them reject us as they will, we will not be discouraged, nor cease to aid them all we can, nor to hold forth our hands to drag them from the deep wherein they would sink."¹

Amongst his labours in the course of pure uncorrupted Catholic truth, Irenæus bestowed much labour upon his work "Adversus Hæreses," the only one of his various writings now extant. He was well qualified for this undertaking both by his own extensive learning, and the clear, penetrating intellect which God had bestowed upon him, as also by his ample knowledge of the subtleties and refinements of those with whom

¹ Tillemont, Vie de S. Irénée.

he had to deal, thereby wielding their own weapons against themselves.

The plan of this work is as follows:—The first book contains an account of the heresies against which Irenæus contended; the second proves the Creation to be the work of the One True God, and the Church of Christ to be His flock; in the third, he reasons against heretics by the teaching of the Apostles; in the fourth, from the words of Jesus Christ Himself; and in the fifth and last book, he explains and refutes some of the misinterpretations made by the heretics of certain of S. Paul's words. Amongst the other writings of S. Irenæus was a work called the “Ogdoade,” at the beginning of which he placed the following inscription: “I adjure thee, whosoever thou art that transcribest this book, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by His glorious Appearance when He shall come to judge the quick and the dead, to compare what thou hast copied, and to correct it by this original manuscript, from which thou hast carefully transcribed; and that thou also copy this adjuration, and insert it in thy copy.”¹

Eusebius mentions writings of S. Irenæus on Schism, on Knowledge, and on the Sovereignty of God. He likewise seems to have written various epistles.

We have already mentioned the Quartodeci-

¹ Euseb. v. 20.

man controversy, in which so apostolical and charitable a mind was displayed by S. Polycarp. Anicetus was then Bishop of Rome; his high office had been successively filled by Soter and Eleutherius; and in the year 180, this prelate was succeeded by Victor, a man of a violent, ungoverned temper, and most imperious and irritable under any opposition whatsoever. Victor revived the controversy concerning the keeping of Easter-day; the Asiatic Bishops remained firm to their point; and Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, wrote to him, citing the numerous and weighty opinions on their side, and professing their intention of adhering to the discipline received from such holy men. Upon this Victor impetuously pronounced all such as differed from him to be excommunicate, and guilty of heterodoxy. Synods were called at Cæsarea, at Jerusalem, Pontus, and many other places. Irenæus convened a Synod of the Gallican Churches, where, together with thirteen Bishops, he defended the Western custom of keeping Easter. Some of these and other Bishops both on Victor's side and amongst his opponents, wrote to the Roman prelate, remonstrating against his hasty and uncharitable proceeding; amongst others S. Irenæus, who, after maintaining that the festival of the Resurrection of our Blessed Lord could never be so fittingly kept as on the Lord's Own Day, nevertheless showed the unkindness and want of good

feeling that would break asunder the bonds of brotherhood between Churches, for a difference in such a matter of discipline. "Not only," he says, "is the dispute respecting the day, but also respecting the manner of fasting. For some think they ought to fast only one day, some two, some more days; some compute their day as consisting of forty hours, night and day; and this diversity existing among those that observe it, is not a matter that has just sprung up in our times, but long ago among those before us, who perhaps, not having ruled with sufficient strictness, established the practice that arose from their simplicity and inexperience, and yet with all these maintained peace, and we have maintained peace with one another, and the very difference in our fasting establishes the unanimity in our faith."¹ Irenæus then alludes to the conduct of S. Polycarp to Anicetus,² and how they remained in full communion, love, and charity, though they each held to their own opinion on this very point.³

¹ Euseb. v. 24.

² Life of S. Polycarp.

³ This controversy was finally determined by the Council of Nice, A.D. 323 (Euseb. Life of Constantine, book iii. 14; Socrates, bk. i. 8; Sozomen, bk. i. 22); when it was decreed by general consent of the Church, that the Feast of the Resurrection should be universally celebrated on Sunday, and unity of discipline was thus restored. The eastern branches of the Church Catholic obeyed this voice of authority, and the isolated individuals who persisted in

After this interposition on behalf of Christian brotherly kindness, peace, and love, we hear little more of S. Irenæus, who continued to exercise a wise and paternal rule over his flock. A time of rest and repose was granted to the Church after her grievous persecutions. Under the reign of Commodus the Christians were unmolested, probably from no higher motive than that they were under the protection of Marcia, a woman of low extraction, who exercised great power over the grovelling, brutish mind of the Emperor. Blood ran like water, it is true, during his execrable reign, but it was alike from heathen or Christian veins, no further crime being needed than that any one should chance to displease Commodus or his favourites, to incur instant death. He himself became in habit of life, as of mind, a mere gladiator, and at last Marcia having accidentally discovered a list of persons condemned to death, headed by her own name, summoned two chief officers who were involved in the same sentence, and to save themselves they murdered Commodus. Marcia gave him poison, and the result of that appearing doubtful, a wrestler was introduced who strangled him whilst in the bath.¹

abiding by their own opinion against the Church, were treated as schismatics, and passed by the name of Quartodecimans. It was long, however, before the traces of this difference were altogether obliterated.

¹ Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs. Commodus was at

This was on the last day of the year 192. Christians and heathens might both have looked with hope to the administration of the wise and good Pertinax, whose accession to the imperial purple was welcome to all except the Praetorian guard, to whose enmity he fell a victim eighty-six days after the murder of his predecessor. The Roman empire was then purchased for the sum of 6250 drachmas by Didius Julianus,¹ an old and contemptible senator; but however lost to all sense of patriotism and decency the praetorians might be, the rest of the empire was not likely to submit to such indignities. The three leading spirits of the time all aimed at succeeding the murdered Pertinax. These were, first, Clodius Albinus, the governor of Britain, a man of illustrious birth and of considerable military talent, but of corrupt private life.² The second aspirant for the throne was Percennius Niger, a man of low birth but of high merit, which alone had raised him to the government of Syria. Strict in his own life, affable, and gentle, but a determined and rigid disciplinarian, and an able commandant, Niger was a popular man, and de-

a subsequent period deified by Severus. Upon this Tillemont remarks: "Et peut-être que Commode méritait bien autant de passer pour Dieu que Jupiter."—Comm. ar. xiv.

¹ Gibbon, chap. v.

² "On l'a appellé le Catelin de son siècle."—Tillemont, Hist. des Emp.

servedly so. When the tidings of Pertinax's murder reached Syria, all the Asiatic provinces joined in offering their homage to him as Emperor. Had he acted with the promptitude which might naturally have been looked for in such a man, Niger might have met with a different fate; as it was he was dazzled with his prosperity, and trifled away time, which was meanwhile forwarding the cause of his rival Severus. Septimius Severus, an African by birth, was at this period governor of Pannonia; his ambition was boundless, eloquence and bribes together easily brought his army to proclaim him emperor. A consummate master in dissimulation, Severus immediately began to conquer his rivals one by one. Courting popularity with his army by making himself as one of his common soldiers, he rapidly marched to Rome, where the mercenary prætorians readily admitted him; Severus executed the usurper Julian, and gave a general and forcible impression of his power and determination, by disbanding the prætorian guards, and banishing them a hundred miles from Rome.

He was equally successful against his rivals, towards whom he displayed the most odious treachery, pretending the utmost friendship for Albinus,¹ whilst endeavouring to have him assas-

¹ Calling him the "brother of his soul and empire."—Gibbon, chap. 2.

sinated. At last Albinus came into Gaul, where, entering upon an unequal combat with Severus' army of one hundred and fifty thousand men, the brave warriors of the British army were altogether routed, and their general put to death as he fled from the field of battle. Percennius Niger having been twice defeated, once near the Hellespont, and again near Issus in Cilicia, was beheaded, and thus both rivals paid with their lives for the presumption of opposing the proud, treacherous victor.

The Christians did not incur Severus' displeasure by joining with his adversaries; they were on his side simply because being acknowledged by the senate and people they regarded him as the lawful sovereign, and the maxim of their religion was that "the powers that be are ordained of God."¹ The Emperor had also received the benefit of healing under some distemper from one Proculus, a Christian, whom in return he lodged in the royal palace as long as he lived.²

For some time Severus was absorbed with political cares in the endeavour to restore the Roman empire to the prosperous state it had

¹ "No disciple of Albinus, or of Niger, or of Cassius could be found among the disciples of Christ."—Tertul. ad Scap. ii.

² "He sought out Proculus, a Christian . . . who had once cured him by means of oil, and kept him in his own palace even to his death."—Ad Scap. iv.

formerly known ; and so successful was he, “that he boasted with a just pride, that, having received the empire oppressed with foreign and domestic wars, he left it established in profound, universal, and honourable peace.”¹ But Severus was an astrologer, and a devoted believer in magic, and therefore his leniency to the Christian Faith could at best be only toleration or indifference, so that when the populace clamoured for the shedding of Christian blood² he little heeded justice, or aught save expediency ; but to gratify the public excitement he published an edict of persecution, A.D. 202, which was rigorously carried into execution in all parts of the empire, and sufferings and death once more became the inheritance of the Christians. In Lyons, where the Church, nourished and watered by martyrs’ blood, had prospered most specially, the heathen were peculiarly bitter, and vast numbers of Christians perished, till the very streets ran with blood. The details of the persecution have not reached posterity : but as might have been anticipated, the noble-hearted Bishop was not permitted to live through a second harvest of the faithful ; he guarded his people, probably

¹ Gibbon, chap. v.

² There had been some degree of persecution existing since the year 197, although not systematic, yet the old laws of Trajan were sufficient to give countenance to the authorities who wished to vex the faithful.—Tillemont, Hist. des Emp.

until the greater part had perished, and then, after undergoing several kinds of torture, he was beheaded.

His dead body was with difficulty secreted by one of his priests named Zachary, who survived S. Irenæus, and who contrived to inter it in a vault between the remains of Epipodius and Alexander (probably the Phrygian physician), who had been martyred in the reign of Antoninus. It is said that an ancient epitaph found in the church of S. Irenæus at Lyons, states that 19,000 Christians suffered martyrdom at the same time with their Bishop. His body remained in one of the principal churches of Lyons, until the year 1562, when it was sacrilegiously disinterred by the Calvinists, who insulted his venerated remains and scattered the members; but they were partly gathered together again by some one imbued with more reverence, and restored to their original resting-place.

All the Churches must join in a grateful remembrance of S. Irenæus; the Greek Church commemorates him on the 23rd of August, and that of Rome on June 28th. Few men ever lived with a more hearty love of God and of men, or with a more entire self-devotion to His work, which induced him to leave his native country for ever and fix himself in a land of strangers, where he had to master a new, and to him it would probably appear, uncouth language. But S. Irenæus counted the Church of Christ his

home, and seeking no earthly rest or ties he went calmly on his way, his eyes fixed on his great Home, and so “died in faith. . . . God is not ashamed to be called his God, for He hath prepared for him a city.”¹

¹ Heb. xi. 18.



TERTULLIAN.

"How art thou fallen! seeking, 'mid the stars
To set thy nest; unloos'd from fleshly bars,
Striving the chasten'd soul to 'wind too high,'
For one encompass'd with humanity!
Could not thy Mother's milk and quiet breast
Suffice thee, nurturing to Eden's rest?
Thou wast her glory; and the fiend of pride,
Ne'er could have won thee from her peaceful side,
Were he not trick'd in guise of lowness.
Thou art her glory still; and she no less
Puts on the armouries of thy soberer soul,
And reads from thy sad fall her lesson of control."

The Cathedral.



TERTULLIAN.

CHAPTER I.

“ Happy those early days, when I
Shin’d in my angel-infancy !

When yet had I not walked above
A mile or two from my first love.

Oh how I long to travel back
And tread again that ancient track !”

H. Vaughan, 1651.

CHARACTER OF TERTULLIAN—HIS BIRTH—EDUCATION—
FOLLOWS THE LEGAL PROFESSION.—HIS CONVERSION—
WRITES ON REPENTANCE—HOLY BAPTISM—DISCIPLINE
OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH CONCERNING IT.

It is with pain and reluctance that we turn from the histories of those holy men, who have gone on from their regeneration at the Font, steadily looking onwards, the flame of their devotion

“ Still tending with intenser ray,
To Heaven whence first it came ;”

who having by God’s Grace, once “ been enlightened, and tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and made

partakers of the Holy Ghost," neither counted themselves to have yet attained, nor doubted of the power of that Spirit to lead them on to perfection, not here but in heaven, and so laid down their lives with joy, whether at the immediate summons of God, or by the hand of man permitted by Him as His agent, leaving bright and glorious examples to us all through their course, but the brightest and best the last.

Sadly must we turn from such as these to one who promised fair to be as bright and noble an example as they, but who, led astray by self-confidence and the delusions of Satan, forsook the Holy Mother for whom he had combated so valiantly, and even turned the weapons which had once defended her against her own bosom, falling into the grievous sin of schism, and leaving to posterity a solemn and impressive warning what to shun, rather than what to imitate.

Had we only to discover in Tertullian a worldly-minded, unsteady man, who for his own interest had adopted Christianity, and then fallen away when counter interests, or restless curiosity attracted him elsewhere, it would be different; we should pass him by amongst the many instances of noble talents abused and perverted to the service of the world and Satan; but it is not so in his case. No one can doubt the truth and fervour of his belief, nor the wholly disinterested nature of his character,

which was austere and self-denying in no common degree ; indeed this very feature, exceeding the restrictions which the Church placed upon it, was one cause of his fall. That he was an essentially great man no one can doubt. " Amongst the Latins," writes Vincentius Lirinensis, " Tertullian is to be accounted far the greatest of writers. Who was more learned than he ? who more deeply versed in divine and human knowledge ? for, by a marvellous depth and capacity of mind, he grasped and comprehended all philosophy, all sects, their founders and maintainers, and all other histories whatsoever. So clear, so solid, so forcible was his understanding, that whatsoever he undertook to overcome, he did it either by the penetration of his wit, or by the weight of his reasoning. Who can sufficiently commend his style, which is so fraught with the eloquence of reason, that those who are not persuaded thereby, yet are forced to yield to him, each word being, as it were, a sentence in force, each sentence a victory over his adversaries ? Marcion and Apelles, Praxeas and Hermogenes, Jews, Gentiles, Gnostics, and others, whose blasphemies have been overthrown by his numerous and powerful writings, know this. And yet with all this, Tertullian forsaking the Catholic doctrine, the ancient and universal Faith, proving himself more eloquent than faithful, deserved that which the blessed Hilary said of him, that ' his last error discrediteth his most

worthy writings,' and he became a stumbling-block to the Church."¹

There are many who have felt what it is to see those on whom they have leaned with undivided confidence, forsaking the truths which they themselves have taught—truths taught with such fervour, that the effects of their own teaching can never be effaced, even by their own altered doctrines. Such have tasted the bitterness of gradual mistrust, of lurking doubts where all had seemed stedfast, immoveable as the Holy Faith, because bound up and centred in it; the unwilling, yet for ever reiterated whisper, Can such a man be abandoned of God, and left to follow his own devices, and forsake the vineyard where he has assigned to him his task? They have experienced the desolation of heart when that which once they would not have borne to hear mentioned or alluded to ever so slightly has come to pass, and the guide, the familiar friend, the brother, is no longer with them or of them; when, instead of treading together the same narrow path with one aim in view, the holy, and, as they thought, specially chosen servant of God has taken a road of his own selection, and they must go alone; hoping indeed, through His Mercy Who would have all men to be saved, that hereafter they may meet again where discord and separation shall be no more, yet never again to

¹ Vincent. Adv. Heres. c. xviii.

walk in unity and brotherhood here on earth. Such of these as have turned aside weeping, not glorying in their own stedfastness, but rather with tenfold mistrust and watchfulness of self praying night and day with an earnestness that man might not understand, but God does, for those who have cast so deep a shadow over their path, and shunning more carefully than ever, the admittance of a thought that might tend to schism,—such can enter into the spirit with which the Church mourned over her fallen son, who even so crushed the hopes and expectations of the multitudes attracted to him by his surpassing talents and powers of mind.

“ Alas ! my brother, round thy tomb
In sorrow kneeling, and in fear,
We read the pastor’s doom
Who speaks and will not hear.
The grey-hair’d saint may fail at last,
The surest guide a wanderer prove ;
Death only binds us fast
To the bright shores of love.”

But whilst we deplore his declension from the Catholic Faith, we must not be blind to the many valuable lessons to be derived from his history, as well as from his writings (many of which are composed in the clearest, most Catholic spirit, and condemn his later errors even more than all else written against them), as from the example how soon the most masterly and comprehensive mind is led astray, if once it re-

laxes a firm hold of the rule of Faith. We shall have occasion to return to this subject as we trace Tertullian's life, and more need not be said here.

Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus was of Roman extraction, being descended from the important Gens Septimia. His father was a soldier, and held a centurion's office under the proconsul of Africa. It was at Carthage, the metropolis of that country, that Tertullian was born, probably about the year 160. His father was a heathen, and Tertullian himself was educated as such ; for in his famous *Apology*, giving an account of what Christians believe, he says, " God hath from the beginning sent forth into the world men, worthy by reason of their righteousness and innocence, to know Him, and to make Him known, overflowing with the Divine Spirit, whereby they might preach that there is One God, Who hath created all things, Who hath formed man out of the ground (for this is the true Prometheus), Who hath ordered the world by the appointed courses, and issues of the seasons ; Who hath next put forth the signs of His Majesty in judgment, by fires and water ; Who for the deserving of His love, hath determined those laws, which ye are ignorant of and neglect, but hath appointed rewards for those who obey them ; Who, when this world shall have been brought to an end, shall judge His own worshippers unto the restitution of eternal life,

the wicked unto fire equally perpetual and continual; all that have died from the beginning being raised up, and formed again, and called to an account for the recompense of each man's deservings. These things we also once laughed to scorn, we were of you. Christians are made, not born such."¹ Tertullian's education was such as alone could produce so learned and accomplished a man; he was skilled in all sciences,² in languages, poetry, history, oratory, philosophy, mathematics; besides an accurate knowledge of Roman law,³ which he seems to have followed as a profession at the outset of his career. At this time Tertullian lived a life of pleasure, such as amongst his heathen contemporaries would pass for a reputable, unimpeachable course, participating in all the authorized amusements of the city; amongst others, the gladiatorial combats and sports of the amphitheatre, which at a later period he held in the utmost abhorrence, so that in a treatise which he wrote against them, he says, "Although no one is able to describe all these things more completely than myself, unless he be one who is still a spectator, I would rather not complete the tale

¹ *Apol.* xviii.

² *Lactantius*, quoted by *Tillemont*.—*Tertul.* i.

³ "Tertullian made himself accurately acquainted with the laws of the Romans, and besides his eminence in other respects, was particularly distinguished among the eminent men of Rome."—*Euseb.* ii. 2.

than call it to mind."¹ Yet though the greater part of men at that time did the like and thought no harm, Tertullian when a Christian looked back on this time with hearty compunction and repentance, speaking of himself as a man of the world, blind without the light of the Lord,² one who surpassed in sins, yet who embracing repentance, as the man who is shipwrecked embraceth some plank for protection, should be saved.³

We know nothing definite concerning the time of Tertullian's conversion to Christianity, or when the stains of his early sins were washed away in the purifying laver of Holy Baptism; but that it was a time of the deepest solemnity and importance to him, we have very ample evidence in his books on the subject of Repentance and Baptism. In the former, he begins by explaining what repentance is, and applies it to all sin, both of thought and deed. "Because the body and spirit are two things, their sins do not therefore differ; on the contrary, they are rather of the same nature, because these two things make up one; lest any should distinguish between their sins according to the difference of the two substances, so as to esteem one lighter or heavier than the other. For both the flesh and the spirit are things of God, the one moulded by His Hand, the other made perfect by His Spirit. Seeing then that they equally

¹ De Spect. xix.

² De Poenit. i.

³ Ibid. iv.

pertain to the Lord, whatever in them sinneth, equally offendeth God. Canst thou distinguish between the acts of the Flesh and those of the Spirit ? between which there is, both in life, and in death, and in the Resurrection, so much union and fellowship, that at that Day they shall be raised together, either for life or for condemnation ; because doubtless they have equally either sinned or lived innocent. Sins not only of deed, but of will also, must be avoided and must be cleansed by repentance."¹

His exhortations to man, who is but as a drop in a bucket, and as the dust of the threshing-floor, to turn to God, Who will make him as a tree planted by the waters, are most fervent; and he urges upon them not to delay, presuming upon the baptismal rite which is to cleanse them. "As soon as thou knowest the Lord, fear Him: as soon as thou hast seen Him, give Him reverence."²

But inasmuch as man is always prone to sin, and may fall back, and God "would not threaten the impenitent, if He would not pardon the penitent;" Tertullian urges such to remember that even after "the bar of Baptism is interposed God hath yet suffered some opening to remain. He hath placed in the porch a second repentance, which may open unto them that knock."³

¹ De Pœnit. iii.

² Ibid. vi.

³ Ibid. vii.

Here Tertullian sets forth forcibly the blessed and precious Catholic doctrine of the power of the Church to loose the bonds of sin, and grant to the penitent sinner Absolution and Remission of sin. This was one of the truths which he cast aside on joining the heresy of the Montanists, for they denied any power of restoration to those who had once fallen into deadly sin. Tertullian's arguments in behalf of the truth have all the force and energy characteristic of his style: "To restore," he says, "is greater than to give, since it is more grievous to lose than never to have received at all. But the mind is not to be forthwith cut down and overwhelmed with despair, if any one become a debtor for a second repentance. Let him indeed be loath to sin again, but let him not be loath to repent again: let him be loath to peril himself again, but not to be again delivered. Let none be ashamed. If the sickness be renewed, the medicine must be renewed. Thou wilt show thyself thankful to the Lord, if thou refusest not that which the Lord offereth thee. Thou hast offended, but thou mayest yet be reconciled. Thou hast One to Whom thou mayest make satisfaction, and Him willing to be satisfied." Then employing the parable of the prodigal son, he says, "but then only (thou wilt be received) if thou repentedst from thy heart. . . if thou seekest again thy Father, though He be offended, saying, Father, I have sinned, and am no more worthy to

be called Thine. Confession of sins lighteneth their burden, as much as the dissembling of them increaseth it; for confession savoureth of making amends, dissembling of stubbornness.

"The more straitened then the work of this repentance, the more laborious its proof, so that it may not be only borne upon the conscience within, but may be also exhibited by some outward act. This act, which is more commonly expressed by a Greek word, *έξομολόγησις*, is confession, whereby we acknowledge our sin to the Lord, not because He knoweth it not, but inasmuch as by confession satisfaction is ordered, from confession repentance springeth, by repentance God is appeased. Wherefore Confession is a discipline for the abasement and humiliation of man, enjoining such conversation as inviteth mercy; it directeth also even in the matter of sleep and food, to lie in sackcloth and ashes, to hide his body in filthy garments, to cast down his spirit in mourning, to exchange for severe treatment the sins which he has committed: for the rest, to use simple things for meat and drink, to wit not for the belly's but the soul's sake; for the most part also to cherish prayer by fasts, to groan, to weep, and to moan day and night unto the Lord his God; to throw himself upon the ground before the Presbyters, and to fall on his knees before the beloved of God; to enjoin all the brethren to bear the message of his prayer for mercy. All

these things doth Confession, that it may commend repentance ; that by fearing danger it may honour God ; that by judging itself the sinner, it may act in the stead of God's Wrath, and that by means of temporal affliction, it may, I will not say frustrate, but discharge the eternal penalties. When, therefore, it casteth down a man, it rather raiseth him up ; when it maketh him filthy, it rendereth him the more clean ; when it accuseth, it excuseth ; when it condemneth, it absolveth. In the measure in which thou sparest not thyself, in the same, be assured, God will spare thee."¹

He goes on to show the blame they deserve, who, from a reluctance to expose their sin, go on

" Too feeble for confession's smart,
Too proud to bear a pitying eye!"

" Why shunnest thou those who share thy fall, as though they rejoiced over it ? The body cannot rejoice in the hurt of one of its members ; all must grieve together, and labour together for its cure. When thou throwest thyself before the knees of the brethren, thou handlest Christ. In like manner when they shed tears over thee, it is Christ that suffereth, it is Christ that prayeth the Father's pardon. That is ever easily obtained, which a son asketh. Verily the concealment of a sin promiseth a great benefit to our modesty ; namely, that if we withdraw

¹ De Pœnit. ix.

anything from the knowledge of men, we shall of course conceal it also from God. And it is thus then that the thoughts of men and the knowledge of God are compared? It is a miserable thing thus to come to confession. Yes, for by sin we are brought into misery, but when we are to repent, the misery ceaseth, for it hath become healthful. It is better to be damned in secret, than absolved openly? It is a miserable thing to be cut, and to be burnt with the cautery, and to be tormented; nevertheless those things which heal by unpleasant means, excuse likewise by the benefit of the cure their own offensiveness, and recommend the infliction of present pain by the gratefulness of future profit.

"If thou shrinkest from confession, consider in thine heart that hell fire which confession shall quench for thee, and first imagine to thyself the greatness of punishment, that thou mayest not doubt concerning the adoption of the remedy. What think we of that storehouse of everlasting fire, when some of its petty vents shoot up such violence of flame, that the neighbouring cities either are no longer, or are daily expecting the same end for themselves? The proudest mountains are cleft asunder in giving birth to the fire engendered within, and (which proveth to us the eternity of the judgment) though they be cleft asunder, though they be devoured, yet do they never come to an end:

meanwhile, who will not regard these inflictions on the mountains, as examples of the judgment which threateneth us ? who will not agree that these sparks are a kind of missiles and skirmishing arrows from some vast and immeasurable fire ? When, therefore, thou knowest that, after that first protection of the Baptism ordained of the Lord, thou hast yet, in confession, a second aid against hell-fire ; why dost thou neglect thy salvation ? why delay to enter on that which thou knowest will heal thee ? Even dumb and unreasoning creatures know at the proper seasons the medicines which are given them from God. The stag pierced with an arrow knoweth that, to force out from the wound the point of the weapon and its barbs that cannot be drawn back, he must heal himself with dittany.¹ The swallow, if it blindeth its

¹ *Dictamnum herbam extrahendis sagittis cervi monstrare—percussi eo telo pastusque ejus herbae ejecto.* The stags have shown the herb dittany good for extracting arrows, they, when struck, casting out the arrows by eating that herb.—*Plin. viii. 27.*

Tasso thus describes the dittany :

“ Hor qui l'angel custode al duol indegno
Mosso di lui colse dittamo in Ida :
Herba crinita di purpureo fiore,
C'have in giovani foglie alto valore.
E ben mastra natura à le montane
Capre n'insegna la virtù celata
Qual'hor vengon percosse, a lor rimane
Nel fianco affissa la saetta alata.”—*Gier. Lib. xi.*

young, knoweth how to give them sight again with its own swallow-wort.¹ Shall the sinner, knowing that confession hath been ordained by the Lord for his restoration, pass it over?²

We may form some conjecture as to the heartiness and sincerity with which he who could write thus would turn from the pleasures and vanities of the world, and prepare for the blessed sacrament of Baptism.

The preparation for its reception was duly ordered and arranged by the Church. On an appointed day, the *competentes* (so called from their petitioning for Holy Baptism) gave in their names, together with those of their sponsors, and both were registered by the priest. They were then examined as to their proficiency in religious knowledge, and for twenty days before their baptism the *competentes* were exorcised. This exorcism seems to have consisted of prayers collected and composed from Holy Scripture, beseeching God to break the dominion and power of Satan in the new converts, and to deliver them from his slavery by expelling the spirit of error and wickedness from them.³ During this

¹ Chelidonium visui saluberrimam hirundines monstrare, vexatis pullorum oculis illa medentes. The swallows have shown the celandine (or swallow-wort) to be most wholesome for the eyes, curing as they do with it their young ones' eyes when diseased.—Plin. viii. 27.

² De Poenit. x-xii.

³ Bingh. bk. x. 2; and S. Cyril, Introd. Lect. “The
s 2

time they also observed a rigid fast, accompanied with prayers and confession of sins.¹ The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Baptismal Service, were made their especial study; and on the day before their baptism it was customary for the Bishop himself to examine the candidates in these matters.

Much important and valuable information concerning the holy sacrament of Baptism as administered in the primitive Church, is derived from the writings of Tertullian. From him and from other of the Fathers, we gather, the following particulars respecting the discipline and external observances connected with it. To all such as gained their living by scandalous or sinful professions, Holy Baptism was denied, until such time as they renounced their ungodly habits. Among such were numbered the makers of idols, actors,² gladiators, soothsayers, and those whose lives were spent in attendance on the public games and races. But any of these forsaking their disreputable trades, were, after due time of trial and preparation, received and baptized.

exorcisms are divine, collected from the Divine Scriptures."

¹ See Tertul. on Penitence above, and De Bapt. xx.
"They who are about to enter upon Baptism, ought to pray with frequent prayers, fastings, and bowings of their knee, and long watchings, and with confession of all their past sins, that they may show forth even the baptism of John."

² S. Cyp. Epist. ii.

According to the magnitude of their past sins they were made to wait a longer or shorter time; from two years upwards they were frequently detained as probationers, and in cases of very flagrant sinners sometimes the sacrament of Baptism was denied until their dying hour. But this was as a punishment for sin inflicted by the Church, and afforded no countenance to some who from motives of indifference, or reluctance to be bound by the strict laws of Christianity, themselves voluntarily deferred being baptized until their last extremity.

The times specially appointed for the administration of this sacrament were Easter, Pentecost, and Epiphany; but chiefly the two former, the whole interval between them being included. But though these were judged the fittest and most appropriate seasons, every priest was at liberty to use any other time, when he saw due cause. Thus Tertullian says that "Easter furnisheth the most solemn day for Baptism, at which time likewise the Passion of the Lord into Which we are baptized, was finished. Nor would any one interpret it unsuitably as a figure, that when the Lord was about to keep His last Passover, in sending His disciples to make ready, He saith: "Ye shall find a man bearing water." He sheweth the place for celebrating the Passover by the sign of water. Next the Pentecost is a very large space of time appointed for baptisms, during which the Resurrection of the Lord

was frequently manifested among the disciples, and the Grace of the Holy Spirit was solemnly consigned to them, and the hope of the coming of the Lord suggested; because at that time when He was received up into Heaven, the Angels said to the Apostles that He should so come in like manner as He went up to Heaven,—that is, at the Pentecost; . . . but every day is the Lord's; every hour, every season is meet for Baptism. If there be a difference as touching its solemnity, there is none as touching its grace."¹ In the same way the proper place for the administration of Baptism was the church, or baptistery (a later addition to the structure of the larger churches, on purpose for the convenient performance of this sacrament); but, according to circumstances, this rule might be dispensed with, and private houses or prisons often witnessed solemn ceremonies of this nature.

When the candidates for Holy Baptism, having been duly prepared, presented themselves at the appointed place, they were first required to renounce the devil and all his works: "I renounce Satan, and his works, and his pomps, and his service, and his angels, and his inventions, and all things that belong to him, or that are subject to him."² This renunciation was usually repeated three times,³ the speaker standing with

¹ De Bapt. xix.

² Const. Apost. vii. 41.

³ Either as renouncing the three things, the devil, the

his face to the west, his arms outstretched. S. Cyril of Jerusalem gives the reason for this attitude : " Since the west is the region of sensible darkness, and he (Satan) being darkness, has his dominion also in darkness, ye therefore, looking with a symbolical meaning towards the west, renounce that dark and gloomy potentate."¹ Then followed the vow of obedience : " I give myself up to Thee O Christ, to be governed by Thy Laws." Before making this profession, the catechumen was made to turn to the east. " When therefore, thou renouncest Satan, utterly breaking all covenant with him, that ancient league with hell, there is opened to thee the paradise of God, which He planted towards the east, whence for his transgression our first father was exiled; and symbolical of this was thy turning from the west to the east, the place of light."² The east has ever been regarded as the quarter towards which Christians should turn their faces in prayer. S. Basil says that we there have our faces turned towards Paradise ; S. Ambrose, that we turn to the Sun of Righteousness : " Thou art turned to the east, for whoso renounceth the devil, is turned unto Christ."³ Therefore this act of turning from the west to the east, signified that the new Christians had turned from dark-

world, and the flesh, or, as in other rites and forms, in honour of the Blessed Trinity.

¹ Catec. Lect. xix. 4.

² Ibid. xix. 9.

³ De Init. 2.

ness to light ; and probably from the habit in Baptism, it became the general custom for all prayers to be offered up in this direction. Quotations to this effect may be multiplied. Tertullian gives this as a reason why the heathen accused the Christians of worshipping the rising sun, “ because it is well known that we pray towards the quarter of the east.”¹ And again : “ The east being the figure of Christ, their churches and prayers were thither directed.”² And S. Augustine says : “ When we pray, we turn eastwards, whence cometh heaven’s light ; not as though there God only dwells, having forsaken all other parts of the world, but to remind us that we should turn to goodness, that is, to the Lord.”³

Besides the renunciation and the vow of obedience, the person baptized was further required to make a profession of faith, by publicly repeating the Creed ; and so peremptory a necessity was this profession esteemed, that it was required even of the dying man who was baptized in his last hour, and if he was too exhausted to speak for himself, then a sponsor answered for him, as in infant baptism.⁴ Whilst making this profession of faith, the candidate was instructed not only to turn to the east, but also to lift up

¹ Apol. 16.

² Cont. Val. 3.

³ De Ser. in Monte, ii. 5. For further authorities on the subject, see Bingham, book xi. 7 ; and xiii. 15.

⁴ Bingham, xi. 8.

both hands and eyes to Heaven, towards Christ, thereby acknowledging Him as his Lord and Master. This confession of faith was, like the renunciation of Satan, repeated three times, following the example of S. Peter, who three times affirmed "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee."¹

There was some variation in the customs respecting unction, or anointing with oil, which in some cases appears to have been before Baptism. There is a prayer of consecration in the Apostolical Constitutions, which asks God to "sanctify the oil in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and grant it spiritual grace, and efficacious power, that it might be subservient to the remission of sins, and the preparation of men to make their profession in Baptism; that such as were anointed therewith, being freed from all impiety, might become worthy of the initiation according to the command of His Only Begotten Son."² Of this anointing, S. Cyril writes thus: ". . . Ye were made members of the good olive-tree, Jesus Christ. . . . The exorcised oil, therefore, was a symbol of the participation of the fatness of Christ—the charm to drive away every trace of hostile influence. For as the breathing of the saints, and the invocation of the Name of God, like fiercest flame, scorch and drive out evil spirits; so also this exorcised oil receives such

¹ S. John xxi.

² Bingh. xi. 9.

virtue by the invocation of God, and by prayer, as not only to turn and cleanse away the traces of sins, but also to chase away all the powers of the evil one."¹ S. Ambrose likens this anointing of Christ's champions, to that which the heathen wrestlers used before the combat. The candidate was at this time also signed with the cross. However, neither this anointing nor that used subsequently, were considered indispensable to the sacrament. "If there be neither oil nor ointment, water is sufficient both for the unction and the seal and the confession of Him with Whom we die."²

The next part of the ceremony was the solemn consecration of the water of the font. S. Cyprian says concerning this: "The water must first be cleansed and sanctified by the priest, that it may have power to baptize and wash away the sins of him who is therein baptized."³ The form of consecration, is thus described: "The priest blesses and praises the Lord God Almighty, the Father of the Only Begotten God, giving Him thanks for that He sent His Son to be Incarnate for us, that He might save us; that He took upon Him in His Incarnation to be obedient in all things, to preach the Kingdom of Heaven, the remission of sins, and the resurrection of the dead. After this he adores the Only Begotten

¹ Catech. Lect. Mys. 2. ² Const. Apost. vii. 22.

³ Epist. 70.

God, and for Him gives thanks to the Father, that He took upon Him to die for all men upon the cross, leaving the Baptism of Regeneration as a type or symbol of it. He further praises God the Lord of all, that in the Name of Christ and by the Holy Spirit, not rejecting mankind, He showed Himself at diverse times in diverse providences towards them; giving Adam a habitation in a delicious paradise; then laying upon him a command in His Providence, upon the transgression of which He expelled him in His Justice, but in His Goodness did not wholly cast him off, but disciplined his posterity in diverse manners, for whom in the end of the world He sent His Son to be made Man for the sake of men, and to take upon Him all the affections of men, sin only excepted. After this thanksgiving, the priest is to call upon God, and say, Look down from Heaven, and sanctify this water; give it grace and power, that he that is baptized therein, according to the Command of Christ, may be crucified with Him, and die with Him, and be buried with Him, and rise again with Him to the adoption which comes by Him; that dying unto sin, he may live unto righteousness."¹

The consecrating priest likewise made the sign of the Cross over the water.

It is impossible to express too strongly the

¹ See Bingh. Of the consecration of the water in Baptism. Bk. xi. chap. 10. Compare this form with the Prayer of Consecration in our Baptismal Service.

importance which the early Church gave to this ceremony of consecration, which wrought the same change in the waters of baptism, as does the consecration of bread and wine in the Eucharist.¹ There is scarcely a Father of the Church who does not express this doctrine most forcibly, and for a considerable time none calling themselves Christians dreamed of disputing it. But when heresies and false teaching attacked this, as all the other leading Christian doctrines, then the true sons of the Church vigorously and clearly contended for it. Nothing can be more decided than Tertullian's language on this subject. "What?" he asks, "is it not wonderful that death should be washed away by a mere bath? Yea, but if because it is wonderful, it be therefore not believed, it ought on that account the rather to be believed. For what else should the works of God be but above all wonder? We ourselves also wonder, but because we believe, while unbelief wondereth and believeth not, for it wondereth at simple things, as foolish, and at great things, as impossible."² Tertullian then goes through a very beautiful, we might almost call it history of water, and its deep importance and significance, beginning with the solemn mention made of it in Gen. i. 2 :—"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." He notices that in the Creation "it was commanded

¹ See Bingh. bk. xi. 10.

² De Bapt. ix.

to the waters first to bring forth living creatures (Gen. i. 20); water first brought forth that which had life, so that there might be no wonder, if in Baptism the waters should be able to give life."¹ He quotes the above-mentioned passage as fore-signifying Baptism; and says, "that the Spirit of God, Which in the beginning was borne above the waters, will still abide upon the waters as the Baptizer. Wherefore all waters, from the ancient privilege of their origin, obtain, after prayer to God, the sacrament of sanctification."

Tertullian brings forward, as types of Holy Baptism, the passage of the Red Sea, the healing of the bitter waters by the wood which Moses cast in it, ending thus: "Never is Christ without water. Forasmuch as He Himself is baptized in water; called to the marriage, He commenceth the first beginnings of His Power in water. When He discourses, He inviteth the thirsty to His everlasting water; when He teacheth concerning charity, He approveth among the works of love, a cup of cold water offered to a poor man: He refresheth His strength at a well; He walketh upon the water, readily passeth over the sea, ministereth water to His disciples. The testimony to Baptism continueth even to His Passion. When He is delivered to be crucified, water cometh in between, witness the hands of Pilate; when He is wounded, water breaketh

¹ De Bapt. iii.

forth from His Side, witness the spear of the soldier.”¹

The ship wherein the Apostles were (S. Matt. viii. 24), he considers to “set forth a figure of the Church, inasmuch as it is tossed on the sea, that is in the world; by the waves, that is by persecution and temptations, while the Lord is, as it were, patiently sleeping, until, being awoken in the last extremity by the prayers of the saints, He stilleth the world, and giveth again a calm to His own. . . . Happy the washing which washes once for all!”

These sentiments concerning the exceeding sanctity of Holy Baptism (mainly dependent upon the consecration of the water, as the external agent) are to be found repeated over and over again in the writings of all the ancient Fathers, but Tertullian’s words have been especially selected to set them forth, as it is with him we are at present principally concerned.

To return to the ceremony itself. It is well known that in primitive times the sacrament of water was usually administered by actual immersion, as indeed the Catholic Church still appoints to be done, giving the option of those concerned whether the infant shall be immersed or only have water poured over it.²

The immersion represented the Death of Christ, and His Burial. S. Chrysostom says,

¹ De Bapt. ix.

² See Office for Public Baptism.

"Our being baptized and immersed in the water, and rising thence again, is a symbol of our descent into hell or the grave, and rising again therefrom."¹ In the case of illness, however, the substitution of pouring water for immersion was permitted.²

But whether by pouring or immersion, the water was always administered three times to the baptized person. Tertullian mentions this, "Then are we thrice dipped;"³ and again, "Not once, but thrice are we dipped, at the name of each of the Blessed Persons."⁴ S. Ambrose mentions the three several immersions;⁵ S. Gregory Nyssen, "This we do three times to show forth the Resurrection of Christ, Who rose after three days."⁶ And so many others, not to multiply quotations. Besides representing the three days' burial of Christ, the trinal immersion is a symbol of the Holy Trinity, in Whose Name we are baptized. The first who attempted to violate this Catholic custom, were the Eunomians, and they were unhesitatingly pronounced heretics. In the early Church it was usual to administer the rite of Confirmation at the same time with Holy Baptism, if the Bishop were present, and before all the ceremonial pertaining to it was concluded. And this was done in the case of infants as well as adults; for it is well known

¹ Homil. in 1 Cor. xl. ² For instances see Bingh. xi. 11.

³ De Coron. 3. ⁴ Contr. Prax. 26. ⁵ De Sacr. ii. 7.

⁶ De Bapt. Christi. 3.

that the former were also permitted to partake of the Holy Eucharist after these ceremonies. The rite of Confirmation consisted in anointing with the chrism,¹ and signing the cross, and the laying on of hands,² that he who in Baptism had been washed, in Confirmation might be strengthened. This ended, or in some Churches previously, the newly baptized were clothed in white garments, to represent their having put off the old man and having put on the New Man, Christ Jesus. Hence they were sometimes called the white flock of Christ.³ These robes were given with an appointed form of words, "Receive the white and immaculate garment, which thou mayest bring forth without spot before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayest have eternal life. Amen."⁴ These garments were worn until the octave of the baptismal day, and were then preserved in the Church. In some cases the newly baptized also bore lights in their hands, as a "figure of

¹ "Having come out of the bath, we are anointed thoroughly with a blessed unction."—*Tertul. De Bapt.* 7.

² "Next to this the hand is laid upon us, calling upon and inviting the Holy Spirit through the blessing. Then the most Holy Spirit cometh down willingly from the Father upon the bodies that have been cleansed and blessed."—*Ibid.* 8.

³ "Fulgentes animas vestis quoque candide signat,
Et grege de niveo gaudia pastor habet."

⁴ See Bingh. xii. 4.

the lamps of faith wherewith bright and virgin souls shall go forth to meet the Bridegroom."¹ The kiss of peace was then given, and they were made to taste milk and honey,² which had been consecrated as symbols of the innocence of children. The Baptismal service was concluded with the Lord's Prayer, which for the first time the new Christians were permitted to use.³ After this was ended, it was usual to proceed to the Holy Eucharist, thereby at once causing the newly baptized to benefit by their recently acquired privileges.

Such was the manner in which Tertullian received the rite of regeneration, which occasioned him to cry out, "Happy the sacrament of water! whereby being cleansed from the sins of our former blindness, we are made free unto Eternal Life!"⁴

¹ S. Greg. Naz.

² Tertul. De Coron. 3.

³ They had learnt it, but were not allowed to use it publicly in church before Baptism.—Bingh. xii. 4.

⁴ De Bapt. i.

CHAPTER II.

“Take heed of over-weening, and compare
Thy peacock’s feet with thy gay peacock’s train :
Study the best and highest things that are,
But of thyself an humble thought retain.”
Sir John Davies, 1595.

TERTULLIAN’S LETTERS TO HIS WIFE—HE CENSURES SECOND MARRIAGES—HIS PRIESTHOOD—THE HERETIC PRAXEAS—TERTULLIAN WRITES AGAINST HERETICS—ON PRAYER—CONSTANT HOURS OF PRAYER—ON PATIENCE—AGAINST THE PUBLIC SHOWS—APOLOGY—THE CHRISTIANS ALWAYS LOYAL—THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH—WRITES ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

TERTULLIAN was married, but we know neither the name of his wife, nor any particulars respecting their union ; that it was a happy one however, we may conjecture from the affectionate tone of his two books addressed to his wife. The description Tertullian gives of a Christian husband and wife (when condemning an union with an unbeliever), would also lead us to conclude that he spoke from experience. “What an union,” he says, “is that of two believers, one vow, one discipline, the same service ! Both brethren, both fellow-servants ! no distinction of

spirit or of flesh, but really twain in one flesh! When the flesh is one, so also is the spirit. Together they pray, together fall down, and together pass their fasts: teaching one another, exhorting one another, waiting on one another. Both are together in the Church of God, together in the feasts of God, together in straits, together in persecutions, in refreshments. Neither hideth from the other, neither shunneth the other, neither is a burden to the other. Freely the sick are visited, the needy supported. Alms without torture, sacrifices without scruple, daily diligence without hindrance! No stealthy signing,¹ no hurried salutation, no silent benediction! Psalms and hymns resound between the two, and they provoke one another which shall sing the best to God. Such things Christ seeing and hearing rejoiceth. To these He sendeth Himself."²

The object of these books was to dissuade his wife from a second marriage should she survive Tertullian, and that not on any personal grounds, but derived from S. Paul's precepts, which Tertullian understood as condemning second marriages. In the second book however, he relaxes somewhat, only strongly urging that to marry a heathen, is displeasing in God's Eyes. The opening sentence to his wife is remarkable: "I have judged it meet, best beloved servant in the Lord, to provide even at this time, for the course

¹ The sign of the Holy Cross.

² Ad Ux. ii. 8.

which thou must follow after my departure from the world, if I should be called away before thee; and that thou mayest observe that which I have provided to commit it to thy trust. For in worldly matters we are sufficiently active, and will that the good of each of us be cared for. If for such things we give directions, why should we not be bound to provide the more for our future in things divine and heavenly, and in a manner to antedate our legacy, our admonition, namely, and representation of such things as are accounted to pertain to immortal good, and an heavenly inheritance. God only grant that thou mayest be able to receive in full this gift of my admonition and my confidence committed to thee; to Him be honour, glory, brightness, dignity, and power, both now and for evermore. Amen."¹

Tertullian was admitted to the priesthood, but we know neither when, nor for certain where, he exercised his sacred functions; most probably at Carthage, where he unmasked the heretic Praxeas, who taught that the First Person of the Holy Trinity had descended in the form of the Man Jesus Christ, and suffered upon the cross, thereby setting aside the great doctrine of the One God, yet Three Persons.

It was probably about this time that Tertullian wrote his book, "On Prescription against Her-

¹ Ad Ux. i. 1.

tics," in which, above all his other writings, he condemns his own subsequent sin of heresy and schism. The book commences with a striking passage in refutation of those who alleged the power or spread of any heresy as a sign of its truth. "To instance briefly," he says, "we do not wonder as touching fever, which, among other deadly and painful ends, is appointed for the destruction of man, either that it existeth, for it does exist, or that it destroyeth a man; for to this end it existeth. Wherefore as touching heresies, which are brought into being for the weakening and destruction of Faith, if we are alarmed because they have this power, we must first be alarmed because they have this being; for in that they have a being, they have a power, and in that they have a power, they have a being. But again, a fever, as being what it is known to be, an evil, both as respecteth its final cause, and as respecteth its power, we rather detest than wonder at; and as much as in us lieth, we guard against it, not having the abolition of it in our power. But as to heresies, which bring upon men eternal death, and the burning of a mightier fire, some would rather wonder that they have this power than avoid their having it, though they have the power of avoiding it. But they would have no force, if men would not wonder that they have so much force. For either in that they wonder, they become subjects for the stumbling-block; or because they stumble they

therefore wonder, as though it came from some truth in them, that they have so much force. It is forsooth a wonder that evil hath its proper power ! unless it be that heresies are very strong with those who are not strong in Faith. Heresies derive what strength they have from the weaknesses of certain men ; having no strength, if they encounter a faith of right good strength.

“ This weaker sort of men, indeed, are wont to build themselves up unto their fall, by means of certain individuals who have been caught by heresy. How cometh it (say they) that such and such a man, the most faithful, the most prudent, and the most practised in the Church, has gone over to that side ? Who, when he sayeth this, doth not himself make answer to himself, that they ought not to be accounted prudent, or faithful, or practised men, whom heresies have been able to change ? This too is a wonder, I suppose, that one who hath in time passed been approved, should afterward fall away ! Why Saul, a good man above others, is subverted by envy. David, a good man after the Lord’s heart, is afterwards guilty of murder and adultery. Solomon, gifted by the Lord with all grace and wisdom, is enticed to idolatry by women. For to the Son of God Alone was it reserved to continue to the end without sin. Why, then, if a bishop, if a deacon, if a doctor, if even a martyr shall have fallen from the right rule, shall heresies on that account be thought to have truth on their side ? Do we

test the Creed by the persons, or the persons by the Creed? None is wise save a believer; none is great save a Christian; but none is a Christian, save he who endureth unto the end. Thou, as a man, knowest each man outwardly; thou thinkest that to be which thou seest; and thou seest so far as thou hast eyes. ‘But,’ saith the Scripture, ‘the Eyes of the Lord are high.’ Man looketh on the outward appearance, the Lord on the heart. And therefore the Lord knoweth them that are His. And the plant which He hath not planted, He rooteth up; and He sheweth that of the first there are that shall be last; and He carrieth His fan in His Hand to purge His threshing-floor. Let the chaff of a light faith flee as much as it will with every wind of temptation; the more pure will the mass of wheat be laid up in the garner of the Lord.”¹

Alas, “to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not!” Had Tertullian practised that which he knew so well how to teach, had he clung to that “right rule,” the Rule of Faith, which he once valued so highly, much would have been spared of sin to himself, of hindrance and misleading to others, and of grief to the holy angels who, we may surely believe, grieve over the fallen with a sorrow proportionate to the joy wherewith they rejoice over the penitent.

To this period may also be attributed the book

¹ De Prescript. ii. iii.

on Prayer, wherein Tertullian dwells at length on our Blessed Lord's Prayer, the most perfect of all petitions; and after reprehending some trivial ceremonies of circumstance and attitude as unnecessary, enjoins on all the faithful never to neglect, in addition to the solemn prayers which should begin and end the day, the hours of prayer, *i.e.*, the third, sixth, and ninth hour, which, praised be God, have at no time been wholly forgotten or neglected by the Catholic Church, in any of her branches. Tertullian farther recommends that all daily events, such as taking food, the bath, or parting from a friend, should be sanctified with prayer, so that at no time should the thoughts be long bound to the things of earth, and forget to rise upward to Him Who is our Beginning and End. At all times the things of sense, those matters which of necessity and lawfully engage our attention, are liable to absorb our weak faithless hearts, and make us unmindful, in our concern for them, that they all are important only in so far as the pursuits and occupations of each day must inevitably either lead us nearer to God and His kingdom, or farther from it. If then, following the custom of the Primitive Church and holy men of old, our minds are trained, so that habitually, and in the midst of whatever distractions, the return of certain and frequent hours calls us from the things which are passing away, even but for a few moments to fix our silent thought, our

fervent prayer on Him Who endureth for ever, surely we shall return to our needful avocations with greater energy and perseverance in so far as they are duties, yet with hearts less fixed upon them in themselves ; and should the marked hour steal upon us when engrossed in deed or thought of sin, or of doubtful nature, when the heart feels ill-fitted and unprepared to rise to its Father and Master, should we not thankfully accept such a warning of conscience that we are therein displeasing to His Sight, Who seeth our thoughts afar off, and Who has commanded us always to watch, not knowing the time of His Coming ?

Surely those who have learnt if only to endeavour to see God in all things, and in whose hearts each passing hour awakes a silent prayer, are at least nearer such "watching" than they who think twice a day sufficient for seeking that Help which we stand in need of every moment. They at least may hope to

"Carry music in their heart

Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

That Tertullian led no idle life, his numerous writings betoken ; to this period, in addition to those already mentioned, may be attributed his book on Patience, in which he confesses the "rashness, if it be not even shamelessness," with which he ventures to write on such a subject,

"for the practice of which I am altogether unfit, being a man in whom is no good thing: whereas it is fitting that they who take in hand to set forth and commend anything, should first be found themselves living in the practice of that thing, and should direct the energy, earnestness and boldness of their admonitions by the example of their own conversation, so that their words blush not for lack of their deeds. . . . I, wretched man that I am, ever sick with the fever of impatience, must needs sigh for, and call upon, and speak all my thoughts upon that healthy state of patience which I possess not, when I call to mind, and in the contemplation of my own weakness, ruminante on the thought that the good health of Faith, and soundness in the Lord's religion, do not easily result to any one, unless Patience sit at his side."¹

Tertullian's rules for patience under evils are such as would lessen the amount of suffering in the world greatly, could they be followed. The small ones are to be despised "for their littleness; to the great ones, in proportion to their exceeding greatness, submit. Where the hurt is

¹ De Pat. i.

"List, Christian warrior! thou, whose soul is fain
To rid thy Mother of her present chain;—
Christ will unloose His Church; yea even now
Begins the work, and thou
Shalt spend in it thy strength; but ere He save,
Thy lot shall be the grave."—*Lyra Apostolica.*

small, there is no need of impatience ; but where the hurt is greater, there the medicine of patience is the more necessary for the hurt. Let us therefore strive to endure those things which are inflicted by the evil one, that the rival zeal of our patience may mock the zeal of our adversary. But if there be some things which we ourselves bring upon ourselves, either through imprudence, or of our own accord, let us undergo with equal patience those things which we impute to ourselves. And if there be some things which we believe to be inflicted by the Lord, to whom can we render our patience better than to the Lord ?”¹

He thus sums up the treatise on Patience. “ God is an abundantly sufficient depository of patience. If thou placest a wrong in His Hands, He is an Avenger ; if a loss, He is a Restorer ; if pain, He is Physician ; if death, He is the Resurrection. . . . Patience observeth all His pleasure, she interposeth her aid in all His commands. She fortifieth Faith, guideth peace, assisteth charity, instructeth humility, waiteth for penitence, setteth her mark upon confession, ruleth the flesh, preserveth the spirit, bridleth the tongue, restraineth the hand, treadeth temptations under foot, driveth away offences, perfecteth martyrdoms, consoleth the poor, ordereth the rich, straineth not the weak, wasteth not the

¹ De Pat. xi.

strong, delighteth the believer, inviteth the heathen, commendeth the servant to his master, his master to God; adorneth the woman, approveth the man; is loved in the boy, praised in the young man; respected in the old; is beautiful in every sex, in every age."¹

We have already mentioned the warm disapprobation which Tertullian expressed of the popular games and theatrical exhibitions; his language, always forcible and earnest, becomes vehement as he declaims against the idolatrous, insane, polluting sports of the circus and amphitheatre; for all these, and other equally opprobrious epithets, he wields against them.²

"How wise a reasoner doth human ignorance seem to herself to be! especially when she feareth to lose any of these delights and enjoyments of the world!" Tertullian exclaims, combating those who say that all good gifts are from God, and that therefore the savage beasts in the nobleness of their strength, the gladiator in his power,³ and the skill of the human voice,

¹ De Pat. xv.

² Tertullian did not stand alone in this condemnation of these ceremonies and sports, often so demoralizing in their tendency. Not only were those who made a profession of them denied admittance to Holy Baptism unless they renounced the occupation, but such as were addicted to these pursuits as habitual spectators also.

³ " . . . The buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmured pity, or loud-roar'd applause.

are all lawfully employed for the entertainment of men.

To those who urged that they found no precept against such things in Holy Scripture, Tertullian points out the words, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." He proves the idolatry of the games by their avowed origin from, and dedication to, heathen deities, and he urges that no one can witness such scenes without an excitement and emotion which disturbs the heavenward bent of the mind. "When the tragedian is ranting," he asks, "will he (the spectator) be considering the crying aloud of some prophet? And amidst the music of the effeminate player, will he be meditating a psalm within himself? And when the wrestlers shall be acting, will he be ready to say that a man must not strike again?"¹

He tells a story which has oftentimes been repeated, of a Christian woman, who having been present at one of these games, returned home possessed with a devil. Being exorcised and

As man was slaughter'd by his fellow man.

And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure?"

¹ De Spect. xxv. And in his "Apology" Tertullian says, speaking of the combats: "No Christian is there, unless ti be as a Christian" (that is as the victim), "or if he be anything else, he is forthwith no longer a Christian."—Apol. xliv.

reproved for entering a believer, the demon replied that of right he did it, finding her in his own place.

The treatise concludes thus : “ But what sort of show is that near at hand ? The Coming of the Lord, now confessed, now glorious, now triumphant. What is that joy of the angels ? what the glory of the rising saints ? what the kingdom of the righteous which followeth ? what the city of the new Jerusalem ? And yet there remain other shows ; that last and eternal Day of Judgment, the unlooked for, the scorned of the nations, when all the ancient things of the world, and all that are rising into life, shall be consumed in one fire ? what shall then be the expanse of the show ? whereat shall I wonder ? whereat laugh ? whereat rejoice ? whereof exult ? beholding so many kings who were declared to be admitted into Heaven, with Jupiter himself and all that testify of him, groaning together in the lowest darkness ? Those rulers too, the persecutors of the house of the Lord, melting amid insulting fires more raging than those wherewith themselves raged against the Christians ; those wise philosophers, moreover, reddening before their own disciples, now burning together with them whom they persuaded that there was nothing which appertained to God, before whom they affirmed that there were either no souls, or that they should not return again to their former bodies ; poets too trembling before

the judgment seat, not of Rhadamanthus, not of Minos, but of the unlooked for Christ. Then will the tragic actors be the more to be heard, because more loud in their cries amidst real affliction of their own," &c.¹

Such unmeasured language, however praiseworthy as the truth, spoken by a man who would not hesitate or shrink one moment to speak all that he judged it his duty to say, at all risks, was

¹ De Spect. xxx.

" Dies iræ, dies illa,
Crucis expandens vexilla,
Solvet seclum in favilla.

Quantus tremor est futurus,
Quando Judex est venturus,
Cuncta stricte discussurus!

Tuba mirum spargens sonum,
Per sepulchra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum.

Mors stupebit, et natura,
Cum resurget creatura
Judicanti responsura.

Liber scriptus proferetur,
In quo totum continetur,
Unde mundus judicetur.

Judex ergo cum sedebit,
Quidquid latet apparebit,
Nil inultum remanebit.

Rex tremendæ majestatis;
Qui salvando salvas gratis,
Salva me, Fons Pietatis.

not of a nature to win favour and indulgence for the sect who treated thus with abhorrence and contempt the favourite sports,¹ which were an important part of the religion of the Romans. We have already alluded to the circumstances of Severus's accession, and of the reasons against his persecuting the Christians; yet before his open and violent edict was published, when Christian blood was shed like water, the faithful underwent much tribulation, which induced Tertullian to employ his talents in defence of his creed, and he wrote an Apology, which has received the highest encomiums in all ages for its learning, its acuteness and force. From this Apology we learn the extent to which the religion of Christ was spreading. "Men cry out," Tertullian says, "that the state is beset, that the Christians are in their fields, in their forts, in their islands. They mourn, as for a loss, that every sex, age, condition, and now even rank, is going over to this sect."¹ But whilst the heathen strove against him, the Christian, "if he be knocked down, he glorieth; if accused, maketh no defence; being questioned, confesseth even of his own accord; being condemned, giveth thanks. What manner of evil is this, which hath not the natural marks of evil; fear, shame, shrinking, penitence, sorrow! What manner of evil is this, whereof he that is accused, rejoiceth?

¹ Apol. i.

whereof to be accused is his prayer, and its punishment his happiness? Thou canst not call that madness, of which thou art proved to know nothing.”¹

Tertullian then enters into a detailed refutation of the dark accusations brought against the Christians, and proceeds to enlarge upon the contemptible and profligate characters of all the reputed heathen gods, concerning whom the most preposterous stories are told, as every one in the smallest degree acquainted with mythological history is well aware. He reasonably retorts the accusation of superstition with double power upon his adversaries. “If Christians are accused of worshipping the Holy Cross, a mere thing of wood,” he replies, “the whole religion of the camp is a worshipping of the standards, a swearing by the standards.”² From a tone of irony, he bursts into a solemn declaration: “That Which we worship is the One God, Who through the Word by Which He commanded, the Reason by Which He ordained, the Power by Which He was able, hath framed out of nothing this whole material mass, with all its furniture of elements, bodies, and spirits, to the honour of His Majesty. He is Invisible, though seen; Incomprehensible, though present through His Grace; Inconceivable, though conceived by the sense of man.

¹ Apol. i.

² Ibid. xvi.

Therefore He is True, and such is His greatness."¹

He then speaks concerning the prophets, concerning Christ our Head, and His Incarnation, and His Power and Authority over devils. In reply to the accusation of disloyalty he says: "We pray for the health of the Emperors to the Eternal God, the True God, the Living God, Whom even the Emperors themselves would rather have propitious to them than all the rest. They know Who hath given to them their kingdom; they know, as human beings, Who hath given to them also their life. They feel that this is the Only God, in Whose Power alone they are, to Whom they are second in power, after Whom they are first. They reflect how far the powers of their empire avail, and thus they understand God. They acknowledge that they prevail through Him, against Whom they cannot prevail. In a word, let the Emperor conquer Heaven, carry Heaven captive in his triumph, send his guards to Heaven, lay on Heaven his taxes. He cannot. Therefore is he great because he is less than Heaven; for he himself is of Him, of Whom is both Heaven and every creature. Thence is he an Emperor, whence he was also a man, before he was an Emperor; thence cometh his power, whence came also his breath. Thither we Christians, looking

¹ Apol. xvii.

up with hands spread open, because without guilt; with head uncovered, because we are not ashamed; finally, without a prompter, because we pray from the heart: are ever praying for all kings, that they may have a long life, a secure dominion, a safe home, valiant armies, a faithful senate, a righteous people, a world at peace, and whatever be the desire both of the man and of the king. These things I cannot ask of any other than Him, from Whom I know that I shall obtain them; since it is He Who alone giveth them, and it is I to whom the obtaining of them is due; I, his servant, who alone give Him reverence, who for His Religion am put to death, who offer to Him a sacrifice rich and of the highest rank, which He Himself hath commanded, the prayer that proceedeth from a chaste body, from a soul that sinneth not, from the Holy Spirit; not a single penny's worth of grains of frankincense, the droppings of an Arabian tree, nor two drops of wine, nor the blood of a discarded heart that longeth to die, and after all these foul things a filthy conscience also; so that I marvel, when the victims are being tried before you by the most wicked priests, why the hearts of the beasts rather than of the sacrificers themselves are examined. Whilst then we are thus spread forth before God, let your claws of iron pierce us, your crosses hang us up, your fires play about us, your swords cut off our necks, your beasts trample on us; the very

posture of the praying Christian is prepared for every punishment.¹ This do, ye worthy rulers, tear from us that breath which is praying to God for your Emperor. Here will be the crime, where is truth and devotion to God."² Further on he says: "In doing good to others, we make no exception of persons; for we do it at the same time to ourselves, seeking our measure of praise or reward, not from man, but from God, Who requireth and recompenseth an impartial charity. We are the same to the Emperors that we are to our neighbours; for we are equally forbidden with respect to every one, to wish ill, to do ill, to speak ill, to think ill. That which we may not do to an Emperor, neither may we do to any man; that which we may do to no man, the less perhaps, may we do to him, who through God, is so great a man."³

We must give one more extract, concerning the discipline of the Christian Church.

"We are a body formed by our joint cognisance of Religion, by the unity of discipline, by the bond of hope. We come together in a meeting and a congregation as before God, as though we would in one body sue Him by our prayers. This violence is pleasing unto God.

¹ In that it represented the Cross of his Lord.

² Apol. xxx.

³ Ibid. xxxvi.

We pray also for Emperors, for their ministers, and the powers, for the condition of the world, for the quiet of all things, for the delaying of the end. We come together to call the Sacred Writings to remembrance, if so be that the character of the present times compel us either to use admonition or recollection in anything. In any case, by these holy words we feed our faith, raise our hopes, establish our confidence; nor do we the less strengthen our discipline by inculcating precepts. Here, too, are exercised exhortations, corrections, and godly censure. For our judgment also cometh with great weight, as of men well assured that they are under the Eye of God; and it is a very grave forestalling of the Judgment to come, if any shall have so offended as to be put out of the communion of prayer, of the solemn assembly, and of all holy fellowship. The most approved elders¹ preside over us, having obtained this honour not by money, but by character; for with money is nothing pertaining unto God purchased. . . . In a sort of treasury every man placeth a small gift; . . . no man is constrained, but contributeth willingly. These are as it were the deposits of piety; for afterwards they are not disbursed in feasting and in drinking, but for feeding and burying the poor, for children without money and without parents, and for old

¹ "Presides," Bishops.

men now house-ridden, for the shipwrecked also, and for any who in the mines, or in prison, become their Creed's pensioners, so that it be only for the sake of the way of God. But it is the exercise of this sort of love which doth, with some, chiefly brand us with a mark of evil. 'See,' say they, 'how they love each other!' "¹

The treatise of the "Witness of the Soul," upon the immortality of our being, as testified

¹ Apol. xxxix. The duty of almsgiving was warmly and invariably inculcated upon Christians, especially on the Lord's Day, which of itself, says S. Chrysostom, calls men to almsgiving. "For call to mind what ye attained to on this day, how all the unutterable blessings, and that which is the root and the beginning of our life, took place on this day. But not in this regard only is the season convenient for a zealous benevolence, but also because it hath rest and immunity from toils: the soul, when released from labours, becoming readier and apter to show mercy. Moreover, the communicating on that day in mysteries so tremendous and immortal, instils great zealousness. On it, accordingly, *let each one of you* (S. Chrysostom is quoting S. Paul's words), not merely this or that individual, but *each one of you*, whether poor or rich, woman or man, slave or free, lay up in store by himself."—Hom. on 1 Cor. xliii. 2. And again he says that the poor stand around the church-doors, to urge the compassion of worshippers. "We should cleanse our souls by beneficence and charity first, and then go and offer up our prayers. For water is not more adapted by nature to wash away the spots of the body, than the power of almsdeeds is to cleanse the filth of the soul."—Hom. de Verb. Apost. xxv. "Alms maketh an atonement for sins."—Ecclus. iii. 30.

by the natural impulses and dictates of our souls, is supposed to be a sort of supplement to the "Apology," continuing the argument contained therein.¹

¹ Oxford Trans.

CHAPTER III.

" Happy name I you, my brethren, who, not ever doomed
to roam,
In the Eternal Father's Mansion from the first have dwelt
at home.

I lie here, a star of Heaven, fall'n upon this gloomy place,
Scarce remembering what bright courses I was once allowed
to trace."

Rev. R. C. Trench.

THE CARTHAGINIAN MARTYRS—S. PERPETUA—FELICITAS—
TERTULLIAN WRITES TO THE MARTYRS—TO SCAPULA—
COMMENCEMENT OF TERTULLIAN'S ERRORS—MONTANUS—
TERTULLIAN IS GUILTY OF SCHISM—LEAVES THE MON-
TANISTS AND ESTABLISHES AN INDEPENDENT SECT—HIS
HERETICAL WRITINGS.

THE fatal edict, which brought so terrible a persecution upon the Christians, has already been mentioned.¹ It was followed by atrocities such as would chill the heart with horror, did not the special mercies vouchsafed to the sufferers, turn our attention from their bodily anguish to the Goodness of Him Who permitted such trouble to come upon them, and watched over them the while. The history of some of the Carthaginian

¹ Life of S. Irenæus.

martyrs abounds in the deepest interest. About the year 208, the governor, Minucius Firminius, apprehended some catechumens;—Perpetua, Felicitas, Revocatus, Saturninus, and Secundulus, all young in years, though strong in faith. Perpetua was of high birth, and at the time twenty-two years of age, the wife of a distinguished citizen, and a mother. She was the favourite child of an aged father,—a heathen; who, learning that his daughter, with others, was committed to prison, hastened to her, reproaching her with bringing so great a disgrace upon her family, and beseeching her by her love for him to deny her professed creed, and be set at liberty. But Perpetua told him that what God had of His Mercy made her, she must continue; and that she hoped to die a Christian. She endured patiently the storm of his wrath and indignation, till at last, seeing how immoveable his daughter was, the old man left her. The lives of the prisoners being in extreme danger, they were admitted to the sacrament of Holy Baptism,¹

¹ It was the custom of the Church, when imminent peril of death thus impended, at once to administer the Holy Sacrament of Baptism; but for those who endured martyrdom without having received it, that martyrdom was esteemed a Baptism, even the baptism of blood. Tertullian speaks of the martyr's death as "the second baptism" (*De Patien.*); and S. Cyprian says that they are "sanctified and consummated by their passion, and made partakers of the grace which God hath promised." For further citations from the Fathers, see Bingh., bk. x. chap. 2.

wherein they received special strength for that which was coming upon them. At first when they were removed to the dungeon, Perpetua's courage seemed to fail her, for she had never seen so dismal and horrid a place ; the heat was suffocating, the soldiers treated the prisoners roughly, and Perpetua had the additional pang of being parted from her infant. But the deacons Tertius and Pomponius (whose office it was to minister to such of the faithful as were in prison), were able to procure them some slight amelioration, and gained admittance for Perpetua's little infant, which was perishing for lack of its natural nourishment, into its mother's prison. This favour being granted her, Perpetua seemed to forget all her troubles, and awaited the future in calmness and resignation. Whilst thus in prison, God vouchsafed to her a holy, happy vision, such as well might strengthen and invigorate her. She beheld a golden ladder reaching from earth to heaven, which was all surrounded by swords and deadly weapons, so that the ascent was very perilous ; and at the foot lay a dragon, to prevent those who would have ascended from approaching. One of her fellow-prisoners, named Saturus, supposed to have been the pastor of this little band, overcame these dangers, and having reached the top of the ladder, he called to her to follow him, bidding her beware of the dragon ; and Perpetua answered : " In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, he shall not hurt me." Then

the fierce beast moved as though he feared her, and she putting her foot upon his head, mounted the golden ladder. At the summit, Perpetua found herself in a spacious garden, where was a stately Shepherd with long white hair, surrounded by multitudes of people also clad in white. The Shepherd called Perpetua by name, bidding her welcome, and gave into her joined hands some curds, which she eat, and they were sweet beyond measure. Then all the white-robed company said Amen, and the sound awoke her. From this vision Perpetua drew the certainty that martyrdom was awaiting her.

Before the prisoners were examined, Perpetua's father once more sought, by every plea that could hope to reach her heart, to induce her to save her life; but she withstood his touching entreaties (in which he even knelt at her feet, kissing her hands), with the same resolute fortitude which had steeled her to his anger. Her only answer was: "Father, grieve not, nothing will happen save what God willeth; we are not at our own disposal."

Another touching appeal to her feelings was made before the tribunal. Perpetua and her companions had acknowledged themselves to be Christians; when her old father appeared, bearing in his arms her baby, beseeching her for its sake to spare her own life.

Moved at the scene, the president Hilarian joined in the entreaty, urging the young and

delicate woman to pause ere she voluntarily endured those pangs which would leave that innocent little one motherless, and break her father's heart. "I am a Christian," was her only answer.

Sentence was passed that the prisoners should be exposed to the wild beasts, and they were carried back to their dungeon, thanking Him Who had enabled them to withstand temptation and refuse to deny His Name. Perpetua had another trial in store; her father now refused to send her child to her; but she bore this in patience, as all that had gone before. When the eve of their martyrdom arrived, her father once more came to her, in a state of frantic grief, which though it did not for a moment shake her resolution, yet cut his noble child to the heart. That night another encouraging vision was granted to her, and the next day the little company of Christ's warriors advanced to the amphitheatre. Felicitas had but just been delivered of a child in prison, and it is related of her, that as she cried out in her pain, one of the bystanders asked how she would bear exposure to the wild beasts, if she could not bear these pangs? On which she replied: "Now it is I that suffer, but then there will be One that will bear my pain for me, because I suffer in His Name."

They advanced with all appearance of composure and cheerfulness, and fearlessly met with the savage beasts. The men perished by being

exposed to bears and leopards; Perpetua and Felicitas were exposed to a wild bull.

Even when tossed and gored, Perpetua retained her calmness, and gathered up her long hair which had fallen about her. At last even the bloodthirsty populace was satiated with the sufferings of these young and delicate women, and demanded that they should be despatched, and an end put to their sufferings. Perpetua seemed unconscious of what she had endured, and her last words being of encouragement to Rusticus (who is supposed to have been her brother), she was delivered from the bonds of earth by the sword of a gladiator. The Church commemorates S. Perpetua and her fellow-sufferers on the 7th of March. It has been supposed by some that Tertullian's address to the martyrs was especially intended for this band of saints; by others, that it was written at a much earlier period; at all events it is most suitable to their situation. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit," he writes, "Who hath entered with you into the prison; for if He had not now entered in with you, neither would ye have been there this day. And therefore give diligence, that He may abide with you continually; so may He bring you from thence unto the Lord. . . . If we consider that the world itself is a prison, we shall perceive that ye have rather gone forth from prison than gone into prison. The world hath the greater darkness, which blindeth the hearts of men. The

world putteth on the heavier bonds, which bind the very souls of men. The world breatheth forth the worse uncleanness, even the lusts of men. Finally, the world containeth the greater number of animals, to wit the whole race of man : it awaiteth, moreover, the judgment, not of the proconsul, but of God. Wherefore, blessed men, consider that ye have been translated from a prison to a place, it may be, of safe keeping. It hath darkness, but ye yourselves are light. It hath bonds, but ye have been made free by God. . . . The Christian, even when out of prison, hath renounced the world. It mattereth not where ye are in the world, who are without the world ; and if ye have lost any of the joys of life, it is a goodly traffic to lose somewhat, that you may gain the more. . . . The prison affordeth to the Christian that which the wilderness did to the prophets. The Lord Himself lived in retirement, that He might pray the more freely, that He might withdraw from the world. It was, moreover, in a solitary place that He showed His glory to His disciples. Away with the name of a prison ! let us call it a retirement. Though the body be shut up, though the flesh be confined, all is open to the spirit. Roam freely, thou spirit, walk to and fro, not setting before thee shady walks, or long cloisters, but that way which leadeth unto God. As oft as thou shalt walk herein in the spirit, so oft shalt thou not be in prison. The leg suffereth nothing in the

stocks, while the mind is in Heaven. The mind carrieth about with it the whole man, and removeth him whither it listeth. But where thy heart is, there will thy treasure be also. Let therefore our heart be there, where we would have our treasure.

“ Be it now, blessed men, that a prison is grievous even to Christians. We were called to the warfare of the Living God even then when we made our answer according to the words of the sacrament.¹ No soldier cometh with luxuries to the war, nor goeth forth from his chamber to the field of battle, but from slight tents, unfolded and tied down, wherein are found together every hardship, and every opposite of what is good and pleasant. Even in peace they are already learning by labour and distresses to endure war, by marching under arms. . . . All their doings are made up of toil, lest their bodies and their minds should be terrified in passing from the shade to the sun, from the sun to the open air, from the vest to the coat of mail, from silence to clamour, from rest to tumult. Wherefore do ye, blessed women, whatsoever hardship there be in this, account it an exercise of the virtues of your mind and body. Ye are about to undergo a good fight, wherein the President² is the living God;

¹ “ I give myself up to Thee, O Christ, to be governed by Thy Laws.”—See Bapt. Service above.

² This metaphor is drawn from the amphitheatre.

the Trainer the Holy Spirit ; the crown Eternity, the prize of angelic being, the citizenship of the Heavens, the glory for ever and ever. Wherefore your Master, Jesus Christ, Who hath given you the unction of the Spirit, and hath brought you forth unto this wrestling ground, hath willed, before the day of the contest, to set you apart from a free manner of living unto a severer training, that your powers might be strengthened within you. For the wrestlers also are set apart for a stricter discipline, that they may have time for building up their strength. They are kept from luxury, from the richer sorts of food, from the pleasanter kinds of drink ; they are constrained, harassed, tired ; the more they have toiled in their exercises, the more they hope for victory. And they, saith the Apostle, that they may obtain a corruptible crown. Let us, that are to obtain an eternal one, consider our prison as a wrestling ground, that having been daily exercised in all kinds of hardships, we may be brought forth to the course before the judgment seat ; for virtue is built up by hardness, but by softness is destroyed.”¹

In a somewhat later writing, the address to Scapula, Tertullian mentions Hilarion, the governor under whom S. Perpetua and her fellow-martyrs were crowned.

We now approach the period when the pure

¹ Ad Mart.

Catholic faith began to be tainted in Tertullian's mind, and when, no longer looking up with reverence and admiration at his stern self-devotion and piety as a model for those who followed, we must rather in disappointment and sorrow mark how this very ascetic and unsparing tendency, when abandoned to the dictates of individual judgment and will, led its possessor into heresy.

Montanus, the founder of that schism into which this great and powerful mind was so unhappily betrayed, was a native of Ardaba, a village of Mysia Phrygia.¹ He had not long been a convert to Christianity, when, as most of the early writers assert, his mind being puffed up with pride and self-exaltation, he became a prey to satanic influences, and was frequently in a state of fanatical excitement, under which he gave vent to numberless strange prophecies and announcements, which Montanus and his disciples pronounced to be divine inspirations, blasphemously asserting that he was specially and actually moved by the Holy Ghost, and terming him the Paraclete. They admitted that the Apostles had been inspired by the Holy Spirit, but not in so full a measure as this their new prophet, upon whom they declared He had descended in perfection and maturity. Two wealthy but profligate women, Prisca and Maxi-

¹ Euseb. v. 16.

milla, joined Montanus, and were endowed with the same extravagant phrensy.

Montanus entrapped the unwary to his perilous heresy, by an external appearance of the greatest sanctity, augmenting the number and severity of the fasts enjoined by the Church,¹ imperatively forbidding all second marriages, and entirely rejecting the scriptural and Catholic doctrine of repentance, refusing absolution to all deadly sin after Baptism, and denying the power of the Church given by her Head, to bind and to loose. In many more particulars this sect offended against the simplicity and unity of the Christian Faith, but it would seem as though these already mentioned would have been sufficient to assure one of so profound an understanding, and so great personal piety as Tertullian, of the falsity and pernicious tendency of such a teacher.

It would require a much deeper insight into the circumstances of Tertullian's life than now can be obtained, to decide what were the causes which gradually led him to separate from the Church.

¹ The Church Catholic, whilst enjoining certain solemn seasons of fasting and penitence on all her children, as Lent, all Fridays, &c., does in no way forbid each individual extending this discipline in private and as need may be. Variety of circumstances and of temperament may render this liberty desirable; but the moment an individual seeks to impose such discipline on the Church in general, as necessary or incumbent, he is then assuming to himself an authority which he does not and cannot possess, and thereby troubling the unity of the Church.

But “Heresy, like all other sin, is attractive in the present, revolting when past, and the mask turned.”¹ It is probable that the natural bent of his temperament led him to a stricter and more rigid rule of life than was usual amongst his contemporaries, and this, far from concealing, the whole tenor of his writings would induce us to suppose him ready to show forth on all occasions. S. Jerome attributes his schism to the harsh treatment Tertullian experienced at the hands of the Roman clergy. It seems not improbable that they may have reproached him with his severe and ascetic habits, as well as doctrine, and imputed these to a leaning towards Montanism, and it has even been supposed² that he was included with a party of men who were excommunicated by the Roman Church upon this very ground. Tertullian himself tells us that his temper was hot and impatient; and such treatment would arouse all his indignation. There is a deep, lowly spirit (and such must ever be nearest to Him Who bore all insult and injury with a meekness we can only strive to follow afar off), which will bear in patience all calumny and the unjust sentences of a hard, unsympathising world, feeling that shame and reproach are our just desert at the best; and blessed are such, for though man may give them the lowest seat, there

¹ Preface to Tertul. Works, Oxf. Ed.

² Cave's Life of Tertul.

is One Who hereafter shall bid them come up higher; but Tertullian was not of these; his haughty spirit rebelled against reproof, and he left her to whom he owed his spiritual birth and nurture to join her enemies, and to wound her with the very hands which she had trained and strengthened.

Probably at the time he took this lamentable step, Tertullian's eyes were not open to the extent of Montanus's blasphemies, he saw no injury done by him to Christianity, but only admired (what to him appeared) the superior discipline and greater strictness of the sect. Certain it is, that having once admitted the principle that a man is at liberty to choose the creed he will profess, and is not bound to remain under the shelter of that Home

"Where God has set his place,"

he wandered again, and forsaking the Montanists, formed a congregation of his own, to whom he gave the appellation of Tertullianists, and who assembled in a place of worship of their own in Carthage; which continued until the time of S. Augustine, who, by the Grace of God, converted the few who yet hung to this skeleton of a heresy, and turned the building which they retained into a Catholic church. Nor can we wonder at this. His mind was too powerful to be fettered by the chains of any human sect or heresy, and having once broken through those cords of love and

duty, which to the faithful and true-hearted are strong as iron, yet soft and pleasant to the soul, it was not likely to remain in subjection to any human power.

Tertullian's pen was not idle ; but it has been remarked in his heretical writings that, though there may be found the same brilliancy and fecundity of intellect, yet the reasoning is more showy than solid, and the reader rather dazzled by his bold and pompous language, than convinced by the force of his reasoning.¹

We know nothing concerning Tertullian's close of life, not even the year of his death ; dead to the Church he became when he forsook her (would that he had indeed died before committing that sin !) ; but while we draw an impressive teaching from the history of his fall, let us not pre-judge him, or presume to pronounce sentence upon him. Far easier it is to condemn than to realize the dangers, the difficulties, and temptations which may have tended to unsettle so great a mind, from its very exquisite and finely-wrought qualities, beyond the comprehension of ordinary men. Who, save those who have tasted it, know the surpassing bitterness of doubt—doubt whether in Her bosom who has borne and nourished them up, they may trust to fall asleep in security and unshaken love and faith ? Assuredly Tertullian bore no light load of carefulness at his heart ;

¹ Tillemont, *Vie de Tertul. Ar. i.*

and whilst we watchfully shun their example, who by cold, unloving harshness, unreality of life, or temporising worldliness, hastened his departure to a strange pasture (for theirs is a sin into which we may easily fall now as then), let us strive to imitate his earlier virtues, his self-denial, his unflinching resolution in the path of duty, his unworldly life ; and remembering Who has said that He will “discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not,” let us hope and pray, and strive diligently to live that our prayers may be graciously answered, that we together with him may be “spared of the Lord in that day when He maketh up His jewels.”¹

“ Ask, saith God, and ye shall receive. only I beseech you that when ye ask, ye remember also the sinner Tertullian.”—De Bapt. xx.

¹ Mal. iii. 17.

S. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

“ Methought I saw a face divinely fair,
With nought of earthly passion : the mild beam
Of whose bright eye did in mute converse seem
With other countenances ; and they were,
Gazing on her, made beautiful. Their theme
Was One that had gone up the heavenly stair,
And left a fragrance on this lower air,
The contemplation of His Love supreme.
And that high form held forth to me a hand :
It was celestial Wisdom, whose calm brow
Did of those earthly Sciences inquire,
If they had of His Glory aught retained :—
Yes ! I would be admitted to your choir,
That I may nothing love on earth below.”

The Cathedral.

[These thoughts are suggested by the Stromata, bk. v. 595.]



S. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

“ Who is the honest man ?—
He that doth still, and strongly, good pursue ;
To God, his neighbour, and himself most true.

Who, when great trials come,
Nor seeks, nor shuns them, but doth calmly stay
Till he the thing, and the example weigh.”

Herbert.

REPUTATION OF S. CLEMENT—HIS BIRTH—LITERARY AMBITION—HIS TRAVELS—HIS INSTRUCTORS—S. PANTÆNUS—HIS MISSIONARY LABOURS—S. CLEMENT BECOMES HEAD OF THE CATECHETICAL SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA—HIS LABOURS—HIS WRITINGS—ANECDOTE OF S. JOHN—PERSECUTION UNDER SEVERUS—LAWFULNESS OF FLIGHT—S. CLEMENT RETIRES FROM ALEXANDRIA—ALEXANDER BISHOP OF JERUSALEM—S. CLEMENT RETURNS TO ALEXANDRIA—HIS DEATH.

OUR information concerning this eminent and learned man is but scanty, and we are unable to collect more than a brief and general outline of his history. Yet the friend of Pantenus and S. Alexander of Jerusalem, and the teacher of Origen, is one concerning the details of whose life we cannot but wish to learn somewhat. His

condition was such as to attract the attention and admiration of those most competent to decide, and after his death, S. Clement's writings drew from men such as S. Jerome the highest encomiums. He speaks of them as full of learning and eloquence, both on sacred and profane subjects, and even goes on to pronounce their author the most learned of all ecclesiastical writers. S. Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, and others, have also commended S. Clement most highly for his eminent abilities.

Titus Flavius Clemens, for such was his name, was an Athenian by birth: concerning his parents we know nothing beyond that they must have been heathens. Born in that great seat of learning, from his earliest age the young man was possessed with a most insatiable thirst after knowledge, which to him appeared the one pearl of great price. His ambition knew no bounds, he sought to "know all things." Accordingly abandoning himself solely to the pursuit of Wisdom (concerning whom he might have said with King Solomon, "I loved her, and sought her out from my youth; I desired to make her my spouse, and I was a lover of her beauty;"¹) he journeyed through Greece, Italy, Asia Minor, Assyria, and finally through Egypt, everywhere pursuing that, his great end—knowledge. But Clement found, as many similar inquirers had

¹ Wis. viii. 2.

done before him, that something more than mere learning is needed to satisfy the craving heart. “When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth (for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes), then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun ; because, though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further, though a wise man think to know it, ye shall he not be able to find it.”¹ Wherever he went, Clement sought to be instructed by the most learned men of the country, and in the course of these lessons, he was at last led into the “more excellent way,” and embraced the Christian Faith. Concerning his teachers S. Clement himself (when speaking of his Stromata, a collection of writings on various subjects), says : “These books . . are treasured up by me as a kind of commentary for my old age, and an antidote to forgetfulness ; as a natural image and sketch of those efficacious and inspired doctrines which I was honoured to receive from those blessed and truly excellent men. Of these, the one was Ionicus, in Greece, the other in Magna Græcia ; the one of them being a Syrian, the other a native of Egypt. Others, however, there were, living in the east, and of these one was from Assyria, another of Palestine, a He-

¹ Eccles. viii. 16, 17.

brew by descent. The last that I met with was the first in excellence. Him I found concealed in Egypt, and meeting him there, I ceased to extend my search beyond him, as one who had no superior in abilities. These indeed preserved the true tradition of the salutary doctrine, which, as given by Peter and James, John and Paul, had descended from father to son. Though there are few like their fathers, they have, by the favour of God, also come down to us to plant that ancient and Apostolic seed likewise in our minds."¹

There has been considerable difference of opinion as to the individuals thus darkly described. The Assyrian teacher has by some been supposed to be Bardesanes; a very learned man who lived in Mesopotamia,² by others Tatian, already mentioned as the disciple of Justin Martyr. But the teacher to whom S. Clement gives so decided a preference over all the others, was Pantænus of Alexandria, himself one of the Fathers of the Church, concerning whom the following brief particulars may be stated. He was a native of Sicily,³ and S. Clement calls him "that Sicilian Bee, who, hovering over all spiritual meadows, and gathering sedulously from the flowers of the Apostles and prophets, deposited in the minds of his disciples the purest honey of light and knowledge." Educated at Alex-

¹ Euseb. bk. v. 11.

² Euseb. iv. 30.

³ Tillemont, Vie de S. Pantène.

andria, Pantænus was a follower of the Stoic philosophy; but he was won by the purity and beauty of the Christian Faith, and both his virtue and his learning were so highly esteemed, that under the Bishop Julian he was appointed as the head of the catechetical school of Alexandria, a most important office, and one which he filled with more than ordinary ability, extending the facilities for instruction beyond what had hitherto been the case.

For ten years Pantænus was thus employed, and then, like a faithful son of the Church, he obeyed the summons of his spiritual head, and left his gratifying and comparatively easy occupation, to serve her cause in danger and difficulty. All nations resorted to the commercial city of Alexandria, and now there came thither some Indians, beseeching Bishop Demetrius, who had succeeded Julian, A.D. 189, to send some learned and discreet missionary into their country to preach the faith of Christ amongst their countrymen. No one appeared to the Bishop better fitted for this important and delicate office than Pantænus; and though he could not but foresee dangers and difficulties innumerable, that good man desired nothing better than to dedicate all his powers, even life itself, to the cause of the Gospel, and accordingly without hesitation he prepared himself for the journey. He was not the first who had carried the glad tidings into that strange land. Some few Christians Pan-

tænus found, and they showed him a Hebrew copy of S. Matthew's Gospel, which had been left amongst them by S. Bartholomew. This precious writing S. Pantænus brought with him when he returned to Alexandria, where, after acting for some time as a missionary, he returned, and died there during the reign of Caracalla. The Church commemorates S. Pantænus on July 7th.

It was upon the occasion of S. Pantænus' leaving Alexandria, that Clement was raised to the head of the catechetical school, over which he presided with no less industry and learning than his predecessor had done, and many eminent men were proud to be numbered amongst his disciples. Of these, Origen and Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, are the most conspicuous. Clement now devoted himself principally to the study of the Scriptures; but he says himself that his former studies in philosophy and general literature were highly useful to him in teaching, as some minds were best gained through such means, and the soul was thus prepared for higher and better things. Surely all attainments ought rather to increase the hearty religion of a true Christian; for he cannot inquire into any subject without seeing more and more how infinitely above all earthly things are "the deep things of God," to which we must not seek to come by intellectual power, but by child-like faith and humble devotion. S. Clement devoted himself to the art of teaching with the same energy he

had evinced as a learner. He himself says that a good teacher should study the actions, manners, and words of his pupils, even their trifling expressions and habits, so as to acquire a thorough knowledge of the capacity of that soul which it is his office to plant, and be able to suit his instructions to the stony-ground, the thorns, and the fruitful ground. He acted on the principle of not feeding the babes with the strong meat of men, but only admitted his disciples gradually, and as they became capable of receiving them, to the greater mysteries of the faith. It is not good, he writes, to cast our solemn doctrines to the investigation of those inquisitive minds who think they know all things, who are swelled with their own vain dogmas, and will not empty their hearts of all such, and lay aside their worldly notions ; but we had rather confide God's Word to those whose ruling principle is faith, for they receive instruction meekly, and act accordingly.¹

In addition to his duties as a teacher, S. Clement exercised the office of the priesthood, and was besides an author on no small scale. His principal work, the " Stromata," as above mentioned, is a collection of discourses upon a variety of subjects, as the word signifies ; and he himself says it is not to be compared to a dressed garden where trees and plants are carefully and studiously arranged for order and effect, but to a

¹ Tillemont, Vie de S. Clement.

thickly-wooded mountain, where all manner of trees, cypress and plantain, laurel and ivy, the apple, the olive, and the fig-tree grow together. This work has been generally considered as displaying very vast and extensive stores of information. Another book called the "Hypotyposes," which is no longer extant, contained a commentary upon the Scriptures. Some time after S. Clement's death, this work was said to contain many wild and heretical doctrines, but there is little doubt that these had been introduced by others who wished to gain for their impious notions the countenance of a man so renowned for learning and excellence as S. Clement. An exhortation to the Gentiles, and a book addressed to those newly converted to the faith, called *Pædagogus*, yet remain : under the latter title S. Clement speaks of the Saviour, His disciples being all simple-hearted believers. In this book he speaks thus of Holy Baptism : " Being baptized, we are illuminated ; being illuminated, we are adopted ; being adopted, we are perfected ; being perfected, we are rendered immortal."¹

Eusebius quotes an interesting story respecting the Apostle S. John, which Clement relates in one of his discourses. It begins by saying : " Listen to a story that is no fiction, but a real history, handed down and carefully preserved." S. John, when journeying from Patmos to

¹ Clarke's Succession Sacred Lit. i. 117.

Ephesus, performed in the countries through which he passed the duties of his apostolic office, founding churches, ordaining priests, and appointing bishops. In one place, being interested more than usual by the intelligent countenance and ardent fervour of a youth who came to him, the Apostle committed him specially to the care of the Bishop of the diocese, who accordingly took him into his own house, and taught him until he was judged fit to receive the seal of Holy Baptism. But upon the Bishop relaxing his vigilance, the young man fell into bad company, and from riotous and ungodly living, he went on to crime, and at last became the captain of a band of robbers, his name being conspicuous as the most cruel and reckless of them all. After a time S. John returned to the diocese, and inquired of the Bishop where was the precious deposit which in the Name of Christ he had confided to him? Then, with bitter tears and groans, the Bishop told that he was as one dead, that is, dead to God and His Church, for that he had become a savage and sacrilegious robber. The venerable Apostle bewailed the grievous intelligence, and immediately hastened to that part of the country where the object of his inquiries now wandered, a dreaded marauder. S. John was soon seized by some of the band, to whom he told his desire that he might be taken before their captain. But as soon as the robber chief saw the holy Apostle approaching, he fled in

shame and remorse. Then S. John called after him, saying, "Oh! my son, why wouldest thou fly from me, thy defenceless, aged father? Come to me, my son; fear not. There is yet hope for thee. Come, and let me intercede with Christ for thee. Surely I would even give my life for thine. Hearken to me, I come to thee as the messenger of God." Overcome by these tender and heart-searching entreaties, the robber hesitated and paused, and at last, trembling and bathed in remorseful tears, he came and embraced the Apostle's feet, who, following up the work of reconciliation which he had begun, guided his spiritual son in the work of penitence, fasting and praying with him, comforting and supporting him under the terror of his re-awakened conscience, until he was permitted to return to the bosom of the Church, who, though stern and rigid in her charitable and wholesome discipline, is ever ready to receive, with unaltered love, such of her children as, with "hearty repentance and true faith," turn again to her and her Master.¹

Thus extensively engaged in works of usefulness for the Church, S. Clement continued till the year 202, when the persecution which arose under the Emperor Severus (of which more has been said elsewhere), fell heavily upon the Alexandrian Christians. What Lyons was in Gaul,

¹ Euseb. iii. 23.

even such was Alexandria in Egypt—the slaughter-house of the faithful. From all parts of Egypt and Thebais the “heroic wrestlers” were brought as to a “mighty theatre of God, where by their invincible patience under various tortures and modes of death, they were adorned with crowns from heaven.”¹ The father of Origen was one amongst many martyrs.

Much has been said and written by holy men on the subject of flight in times of peril, whether it was lawful for a man, in order to self-preservation, to fly from his post. The matter has been indifferently argued, but we cannot but think that there is greater similarity in truth between those who seem to hold adverse opinions, than at first appears; and something should be attributed to the natural tenor and constitution of mind of the writer, as well as the peculiarities of his times, and of his own position. Surely those who were most ready to welcome persecution and the martyr’s crown, when presented by the Will of God, yet would not have needlessly provoked dangers which made their spiritual children orphans, and which in their humility (and the more eminent a man’s holiness, so much the greater will his humility be) they might fear would put them in peril of bringing any dis-honour upon their great cause, by weakness or yielding of the flesh. Thus even S. Ignatius,

¹ Euseb. vi. 1.

who beyond all others burned with an intense desire after martyrdom, said, “I indeed desire to suffer, but I cannot tell whether I am worthy to do so.”¹ S. Polycarp, though wholly unmoved by personal fear, yet when his life was sought after, consented for a while to conceal himself from the persecutors. And S. Augustine, who is generally considered the antagonist of flight, only deprecates it, where, by flying, Christ’s ministers forsake their duties, and leave their flocks destitute of spiritual guidance and ministrations. On the other hand, no one could for a moment suspect S. Athanasius of flying from any feeling of pusillanimity or want of self-devotion, though several times he took refuge in concealment. S. Cyprian, like him, defended those who acted upon the Divine precept, “When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.” (S. Matt. x. 23.) And so did S. Clement of Alexandria, who accordingly left that city, to seek a more peaceful abode. He first went into Cappadocia, and remained some time with his former pupil Alexander, who filled a Bishopric in that country. Here, too, the persecution reached, and Alexander was cast into prison, his greatest consolation being that his flock had a pastor so able to supply his place, as was Clement. He, however, left Alexander while yet a prisoner, to bear a letter from him to the Church

¹ Epist. ad Trall. See Life of Ignat.

of Antioch, where a new Bishop had just been appointed. Alexander writes as follows: "Alexander, a servant and prisoner of Jesus Christ, sends greeting in the Lord to the blessed Church at Antioch, in the Lord. The Lord has made my bonds easy and light during the time of my imprisonment, since I have ascertained that by Divine Providence, Asclepiades, who in regard to his faith is most happily qualified, has undertaken the trust of the episcopate of your holy Church. This epistle, brethren, I have sent to you by Clement, the blessed presbyter, a man endued with all virtue, and well approved, whom you already know, and will like still more to know; who also, coming hither, by the providence and superintendence of the Lord, has confirmed and increased the Church of God."¹

Alexander was subsequently released, and made a visit to the holy city of Jerusalem. At that time the Bishop was Narcissus, who, having attained to the great age of 110 years, found himself no longer equal to the duties of his office, and all the Bishops of Palestine uniting with the wish of the venerable prelate, he induced Alexander to become his coadjutor as Bishop of Jerusalem. They shared the government of the see as long as Narcissus lived (which was for six years longer at least²), and then Alexander continued his rule alone. He was remarkable for

¹ Euseb. vi. 11.

² Tillemont, S. Alex. de Jur.

his mildness of disposition, and for the winning eloquence of his words. His rule was most beneficial to the diocese; in the city of Jerusalem he collected together a most valuable library, which yet existed when Eusebius wrote.¹ He ordained Origen priest, and entertained a warm friendship for him. We hear nothing more of S. Alexander until the time of his death, about the year 250, when in the persecution raised by Decius against the Christians, this holy man was for the second time taken prisoner, this time not to return to earth's thraldom, but to win the crown of martyrdom. He was carried to Cæsarea, and being brought before the governor's tribunal, he gave a "splendid and illustrious testimony," to the Faith, persevering steadily in the truth. He was sent back to prison, and died there before his execution, being already an old man, and worn out with all he had undergone.²

He is commemorated by the Greek Church on the 12th of December, by that of Rome on March 18th.

To return to S. Clement, of whom we know little more. Having borne the letter of his friend to Antioch, he remained some little time there, and then returned to Alexandria, where he resumed his office of Catechist. How long his valuable life was spared to the Church militant we know not, but he was evidently dead

¹ Euseb. vi. 20.

² Ibid. vi. 39.

in the year 217, when Alexander of Jerusalem wrote to Origen mentioning Clement his “master and benefactor,” as one of the “blessed Fathers, who have trod the path before us, and to whom we ere long shall go.”¹ It is probable that he was not a martyr, but died a natural death,² although his name was inserted in “Usward’s Martyrology.” Whenever and however S. Clement terminated his earthly career, we cannot doubt but that his summons hence was the beginning of a blissful Eternity to him; for “whosoever shall do and teach ‘God’s Commandments,’ the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (S. Matt. v. 19.)

The English Calendar commemorates S. Clement on November 28th, and the Roman on December 4th.

¹ Euseb. vi. 14.

² Butler, S. Clem. Alex.



ORIGEN,

PRESBYTER AND CATECHIST OF ALEXANDRIA.

“ Into God's word, as in a palace fair,
Thou leadest on and on, while still, beyond
Each chamber, touch'd by holy Wisdom's wand,
Another opes, more beautiful and rare;
And thou in each art kneeling down in prayer,
From link to link of that mysterious bond
Seeking for CHRIST; but oh! I fear thy fond
And beautiful torch, that with so bright a glare
Lighteth up all things, lest thy heaven-lit brand
And thy serene philosophy divine
Should take the colourings of earthly thought,
And I, by their sweet images o'erwrought,
Led by weak fancy, should let go truth's hand,
And miss the way into the inner shrine.”

The Cathedral.



ORIGEN.

CHAPTER I.

"Angels perceive
 With undistempered and unclouded spirit
 The object as it is : but, for ourselves,
 That speculative height *we* may not reach.

Knowledge, for us, is difficult to gain—
 So difficult to gain, and hard to keep
 As virtue's self; like virtue is beset
 With snares, tried, tempted, subject to decay."

The Excursion.

CHARACTER OF ORIGEN—HIS BIRTH AND EARLY TRAINING—S. CLEMENT, HIS MASTER, AND AMMONIUS—MARTYRDOM OF LEONIDES—ORIGEN RECEIVED BY AN ALEXANDRIAN Matron—HE OPENS A SCHOOL—IS APPOINTED HEAD OF THE CATECHETICAL SCHOOL—HIS ASCETICISM—INFLUENCE OF HIS EXAMPLE—HIS CONDUCT DURING THE PERSECUTION—MARTYRS OF ALEXANDRIA—THE EMPEROR CARACALLA—ORIGEN TAKES HERACLES AS HIS ASSISTANT IN THE SCHOOL—HIS STUDIES AND GREAT LEARNING—FRIENDSHIP WITH AMBROSE—ORIGEN VISITS ARABIA.

Few amongst the early Fathers of the Church laboured more earnestly and effectually in the

great cause of Christianity than Origen, his personal example, his oral teaching, and his most voluminous writings having individually and collectively no mean influence on both his contemporaries and on succeeding generations, whilst his pupils (and few have been able to boast of so many great and good disciples) were the means of propagating in various lands and amongst various people, Christ's Faith. None who trace the records of Origen's life, who mark his early devotion, even like that of S. Timothy, who from a child had known the Scriptures, his unfailing spirit of self-denial and contempt for the good things of this world, and his constancy in persecution ; none surely so doing can doubt of Origen's being one of those who, having "done and taught" God's commandments, "shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven." Yet by many he has been evil spoken of, his doctrines held up in abhorrence as contrary to the Catholic faith, and if not actually condemned as a heretic, at least he has not been reckoned amongst the saints whose blessed memory the Church loves to cherish as an example to those of her children who are still engaged in their earthly struggle. Origen doubtless held some doctrines of a questionable tendency, if pursued to the full extent of their spirit, but who is not liable to fall into error upon deep and abstruse matters ?

And let us carefully mark (for therein

lies the most useful lesson to us all), that whatsoever Origen wrote which might in any way appear to be contrary to the faith of CHRIST's Holy Catholic Church, he declared that he did most unfeignedly regret and repent of; and if not to err is the most exalted and blessed state, surely next in His Eyes Who judges all men, are those who freely and heartily cast away their errors when convinced of them. Better far for Origen to be excluded from those whom his feeble and struggling fellow mortals call saints, if through the Saviour's Merits he is accepted into the company of the " holy and humble men of heart;" better to be ill spoken of amongst men, than to be amongst those of whom it is said :

" And ah ! to him what tenfold woe,
Who hides so well his sin,
Through earth he seems a saint to go,
Yet dies impure within."

Alexandria was the birthplace of Origen Adamantius, a name which, though apparently given him before the adamantine and indomitable nature of his character could have appeared, yet must be owned to be singularly appropriate. S. Jerome also calls him Calcenterus, the Iron-mould, but this appears to be only a surname in consequence of his resolute qualities. It was in the year 185, that Origen was born; his father, Leonides, has been said by some to have

been a Bishop, but this assertion wants authority; it is probable that he was a layman, and as he effectually proved, one devoted to the Christian cause.

Origen was the eldest of seven sons, but of him only amongst them history preserves any account. A Christian himself, Leonides failed not to train up his son in that faith, as the richest and most precious inheritance he could bestow upon him. At a very early age, Origen was already versed in the Holy Scriptures, beyond an ordinary degree, daily both reading them and learning large portions by heart, an exercise in which he took exceeding delight. Nor were these studies merely mechanical; the boy sought diligently to understand what he read, and not satisfied with the more obvious interpretations and explanations, he was perpetually seeking to penetrate into the deeper and hidden meanings of the holy writings, often losing himself in abstruse speculations, and when unable to satisfy himself, perplexing his father with inquiries.

Leonides may have foreseen that this restless spirit of speculative inquiry might hereafter lead his son beyond the due limits assigned for man's curiosity concerning the deep things of God; and probably it was in fact from this very tendency that subsequently Origen was betrayed into wild and fanciful notions, not unattended with danger, which being misunderstood

and misconstrued by less refined and subtle minds than his own, assumed, under their distorted representations, alarming and heretical forms. Accordingly, Leonides checked his boy's speculative inclinations, warning him to be content with the plain practical lessons which were presented to him all through the Scriptures, and which were more suitable to his age and position than their deeper mysteries. Yet, notwithstanding, Leonides delighted within himself to see such an earnest spirit in his son, a sign, he hoped, that Origen would be a great and a good man ; and his prayers in behalf of the boy were mingled with thanks to God for having blessed him with so promising a child. Many a time, when wearied out with the ceaseless workings of his precocious mind, the little Origen lay sleeping in his bed, his father with an overflowing heart would steal up to him, and in the silence of the night pour forth his supplications for his child, and then reverently kiss him on the breast, that breast which he believed to be the shrine of the Holy Spirit of God. And is it not so ? Is not the breast of each little one made a shrine for the Holy Spirit, when borne from the baptismal font,

“ in pure vest,
Rob'd, and wash'd, and seal'd, and bless'd ? ”

Joy to those parents who love to look upon their baptized little ones as temples of the Holy Ghost, from which all stain, all impurity, should

carefully be kept away, so that should they be early called to the Everlasting City, sin may not have cast its sullyng, blighting shadow upon them.

Great must have been Origen's advantages under such a father as Leonides, but he also had no common means of instruction in the public teaching of S. Clement of Alexandria and S. Pantænus. It was in their school that Origen and S. Alexander, afterwards Bishop of Jerusalem, contracted a warm and lasting friendship. After a time, however, Origen was placed among the disciples of Ammonius, one of the most illustrious teachers of the day, who had recently established a school at Alexandria. Ammonius was a Christian,¹ but also a follower of Plato, much of whose system of philosophy he blended with the precepts of the Christian faith. Under this teacher Origen acquired a very extensive knowledge of Greek literature, the works of Plato, Longinus, Nicomachus (and other philosophers besides the Platonists), being constantly in his hands. In Ammonius' school, too, Origen's natural taste for a mystical and allegorical interpretation of Scripture was cultivated and strengthened.

¹ Ammonius was the first who composed a Harmony of the Gospels, which is still extant in a Latin translation. See Dr. Clarke's Succession of Sac. Lit. Ammonius has been accused of forsaking Christianity at a later period of his life, but Eusebius wholly denies the accusation. Bk. vi. 19.

His capacity for learning must have been very far beyond that of ordinary men, for in addition to the studies above named, Origen was well versed in rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, music, and in the general history of philosophy.¹ Well might Leonides be proud of his son, and doubtless his paternal love and solicitude led him into many a day dream of his future honours and eminence. It was the will of God, however, that Leonides should not behold the full fruit of that tender plant which gave so rich a promise—that child of whom S. Jerome has well said, that he was a great man even from childhood. The persecution under Severus has been already mentioned. Amongst the earliest of those who suffered from it in Alexandria, was Leonides, the father of Origen. From the time of his father's imprisonment the boy's ardour was aroused, he burned with a desire to share in Leonides' sufferings for the Faith, whether in bonds and captivity, or death itself. The happy companionship which the father and son had enjoyed in life would have been shared in death, if God whilst gathering the ripe harvest into his garner had not been pleased to leave the tender shoot to accomplish the work yet allotted to it. Origen's

¹ Tillemont, *Vie d'Orig. Ar.* ii. "A man of such learning and universal erudition, that there were few things in Divinity, in human philosophy perhaps almost none, which he had not perfectly attained."—Vincent. Lirin. *Adv. Heres.* xvii.

mother, after vainly employing all the influence her entreaties and tears might have to persuade Origen not to leave her and voluntarily join his father in prison, had recourse to stratagem, and by a series of ingenious maternal devices, succeeded in keeping him a prisoner at home. Thus thwarted in his desire of becoming a martyr, Origen was forced to content himself with writing to his father, encouraging him to bear his sufferings, and beseeching him not to be overcome with any tender recollections of his family, and the sorrow they must undergo in being deprived of their head and stay. "Take heed, father, that thou falter not because of us." How must Leonides' heart have been cheered by seeing such firm and earnest stedfastness in his son, hitherto unproved by real trial. Would not the dark and dreary prison walls fade from before his eyes whilst his memory wandered back to the time when he had knelt beside his sleeping boy, and fondly kissed that breast which now was filled with two such strong passions, love for his earthly father, only subordinate to that mightier love he bore his Heavenly Father?

Hitherto God had mercifully heard his prayers —his Adamantius was indeed firm and stedfast as a rock in the Faith, and should he not trust his future course fearlessly to Him Who ordereth all things aright? The father and son never met more on earth, but both believed unfeignedly in that glorious doctrine of the Church, the

Communion of Saints, and to such there is no separation ; they are persuaded that as neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature can separate the member of Christ from his Head—so in Him are all the faithful, living and dead, united and joined together inseparably and for ever.

Leonides died by the executioner's hand,¹ and his property was all confiscated, so that his family must have been left in need,² for Origen was not yet seventeen, and he had six younger brothers. From this time we hear no more except of Origen himself : he was taken under the protection of a noble lady of Alexandria, a Christian, who assisted many of those who were suffering from persecution. She treated Origen as though he had been her son, and for a time he found a home in her house. Amongst those to whom his patroness extended her friendship was a certain Paul of Antioch, who both held and taught heretical doctrines. As Paul also lived with this lady, Origen was of necessity constrained to see him and converse with him frequently, but nothing could prevail upon him to hold any communion in prayer with Paul, or

¹ Euseb. vi. 1.

² "He lost for Christ's sake, not only his father, but all his substance."—Vinc. de Lirin. Adv. Heres. xvii.

to join with the multitudes who, won by his eloquence, flocked to hear him preach. Origen esteemed it an inviolable law of the Church, binding upon all her children, not to join in any schismatic or heretical proceedings, even though there might be much that was good mingled with them, and young as he was, he adhered steadily to his resolution. Whether this opposition offended his patroness and caused her to withdraw her favour from him, or whether Origen now felt equal to supporting himself and voluntarily left her care, we know not, but within a year of his father's death, he began to teach in a school which he opened on his own account, and by this means easily gained abundance for the supply of all his wants.

The singular ability¹ of the young teacher soon attracted attention, and many, by far his superiors in age and reputation, attended his lectures. Origen even then made a large share of his instructions to turn upon the doctrines of Christianity, mingled with philosophy and science. Not much more than a year after the

¹ "His eloquence, why should I praise it? whose language was so pleasant, so soft, so sweet, that in my opinion not words, but, as it were, honey flowed from his mouth. What things were so hard to believe, which, with force of argument, he made not plain? What so difficult to bring to pass, which he made not to seem easy? . . . There was never any Doctor which read more of Holy Scripture." —Vinc. de Lirin. Adv. Heres. xvii.

establishment of this school, Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, proved how high an opinion he entertained of its young head, by offering to give him the superintendence of the great catechetical school of that city. This post having been filled by so great men as S. Clement of Alexandria and S. Pantænus, was no light office to be undertaken by so young a man,¹ and perhaps had the state of public affairs been different, Origen might have hesitated before he undertook such a responsible duty; but at this time the Christians were threatened with all the terrors of persecution, and the very eminence of the offered post made it one of danger.

A large number of disciples crowded around Origen, many of his former pupils still seeking to benefit by his instructions, which by their soundness and excellence, proved him most worthy of his office. At last the number of his catechumens increased to such an extent that the teacher deemed it his duty to give up teaching anything except theology; and abandoning all the other branches of science and literature in which he was so great a proficient, he thence-

¹ Origen was too young by seven years to be ordained deacon. The catechetical schools were quite under the superintendence of the Bishop, and from Origen and other examples, it is evident that the catechists were not necessarily ordained men, though in many cases both priests and deacons exercised the office.—See Bingh. *Antiq.* Bk. iii. 10.

forth devoted himself to training his pupils in that knowledge which is above all other, that wisdom which is not of the world, but of God.

At the same time Origen resolved to sell his collection of profane authors, which was soon done, and thenceforward resisting all the temptations incidental to his age and his reputation, he gave himself up wholly to a life of asceticism, and a punctual fulfilment of the duties of his station. The Divine precepts concerning poverty Origen received in their most literal acceptation —at a later period he wrote thus ; “God giveth no portion on earth to his priests, because He Himself would be their only portion ; therein lies the difference between them and those not His. Take good heed of this, ye that bear His authority, beware lest ye be rather the priests of Pharaoh than those of the Lord. For Pharaoh’s priests had lands, and tended their lands more than their flocks, neglecting the law of God. But what saith our Blessed Lord to His priests ? He that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be My disciple ! I tremble as I speak these words, for in them I read my own accusation. How then ? do we presume to read and to preach these precepts to the people, while we not only do not renounce all we have, but even seek to obtain that which we have not ? If then we plainly see our duty, let us hasten to be no more Pharaoh’s priests, but the priests of the Lord, like S. Peter, S. Paul, and S. John, who

had neither silver nor gold, yet abounded in those riches which no earthly power can give.¹

Following this literal obedience Origen would have but one garment, and for some years he never would wear any shoes, in compliance with the words, "neither have two coats apiece" (S. Luke ix. 8); "neither shoes" (x. 4). Most of the night he spent in prayer and study, taking the scanty sleep which he permitted to himself, not in bed, but on the bare ground; and he carried the same privations into his food, fasting frequently and rigidly, and at all times abstaining from wine and whatever might be considered as superfluous luxuries. To so great an extent did Origen carry his self-denying practices, that he was in danger of destroying the vigour of his constitution, and inducing disease of the lungs. It was probably in consequence of this that after a time he somewhat relaxed the severity of his ascetic discipline, but to the end of his life he scrupulously avoided all habits of self-indulgence whatever. It would be a worthy subject of inquiry, whether any person, who to any considerable extent gave way to personal indulgence, has been conspicuous for holiness of life, and eminent services offered to God? Nor herein only those men who evidently and notoriously consult first of all their own bodily gratification, and fall into sinful excesses, those of whom the

¹ Orig. in Gen. quoted by Tillemont.

Apostle says that “their God is their belly ;” but those who pass on smoothly through life, placidly enjoying all luxury, and never knowing what it is to “endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,” according to the Apostolic precept. Surely that precept has ever been taken in its literal signification by those holy men whom God in His mercy has set before us as lights and examples. May we not all in our respective measures, learn to do more than we have hitherto done ? earnestly praying that we receive not our “good things” in this life only, forfeiting our eternal feast hereafter.

The actions of the Christian philosopher seem to have had as much influence on those who knew him as his words ; many beholding how little he valued all those enjoyments and charms which this world offers, began to seek after that for which Origen was willing to sacrifice them, so that many, even heathen philosophers, were won over to the true faith, nay more, some even died for it.¹

¹ “What man ever more happy in his scholars ? For of his training grew up doctors, priests, confessors, and martyrs without number. Further, who is able to prosecute in words in what admiration he was with all men ? in what glory ? in what favour ? who that was but somewhat zealous of religion, repaired not to him from the farthest parts of the world ? What Christian did not venerate him almost as a prophet ? What philosopher did not honour him as a master ?”—Adv. Heres. xvii.

When the persecution became urgent, several of Origen's disciples proved the sincerity of their belief, even to death, and received the seal of martyrdom. Fearless of danger, as might be expected of him who had burned to share Leonides' bonds, and esteeming life and its treasures as only a trust committed to his care until the Giver should reclaim it, Origen went about amongst the imprisoned brethren, imparting consolation and strength to them, when in consequence of the very stringent laws which Aquila, governor of Alexandria, put forth, scarce any Christian dared to leave his house, or attempt to visit the captives. But Origen not only ministered to them in prison, he even ventured to accompany the martyrs to their execution, encouraging them with his words and his embraces to the last, although in so doing he often was in peril of his own life, the savage mob frequently pelting him with stones, and threatening him with still further violence. His Christian kindness was not shown only to his own disciples, all shared it who stood in need, but for these especially his solicitude was great, that they should not fall away. His exceeding gentleness and affection for them won the love of all his disciples, and they richly rewarded his care, who were ready to lay down their lives for his and their God. The first of Origen's pupils who received the crown of martyrdom was Plutarch, whose friends regarding Origen as the cause of

his death, in having made him a Christian, set upon him at the time of the execution, and nearly succeeded in killing him. Heracles, the brother of Plutarch, escaped with his life, and continued Origen's friend and pupil for many years. Four, Serenus, Heraclides, Basilides, and Heron were beheaded, another also called Serenus, and a woman named Herais perished by fire, wherein Origen himself says she received her baptism.¹ At last the heathen inhabitants of Alexandria became so infuriated against Origen that they set a guard of soldiers to trace him from house to house when he by concealment tried to elude pursuit. And wherever he was seen bitter reviling and insult awaited him. Epiphanius says that Origen was dragged about the streets of Alexandria, and that on one occasion his persecutors shaved his head after the custom of the Egyptian priests, and then stationed him on the steps of the temple dedicated to their god Serapis, to distribute palm branches to the passers by. Origen apparently acquiesced, but taking the branches and offering them to the people he cried aloud, "Come hither and receive these branches, not in the name of your idol, but in the name of Christ the Lord."²

It is probable that Origen continued to lead a disturbed and uneasy life until, by the death of

¹ Euseb. vi. 4.

² Epiph. Hæres. 64. Quoted by Cave and Tillemont.

the Emperor Severus, A.D. 211, this persecution of the Christians was put an end to, and the furious passions of his son and successor, the inhuman fratricide Caracalla, vented themselves indiscriminately on all who came under his displeasure,— heathens faring now as ill as the Christians had done. The city of Alexandria paid in blood for that which she had caused to flow from the followers of Christ; for Caracalla ordered a general massacre, and placing himself securely in the temple of Serapis, he superintended the odious deed; many thousand citizens perishing, without regard to their guilt or innocence.¹ Very soon after Caracalla's accession, Origen made a journey to Rome, having a great desire to see so celebrated a place. Zephyrinus was then Bishop of Rome, having succeeded Victor in the year 201; and he continued to preside over that Church until the year 218.

However, Origen soon returned to Alexandria, and, at the request of Demetrius, he resumed his labours as catechist with renewed energy. But now the number of his catechumens became so large, that his whole time was engrossed in teaching; so that he was unable to continue his own studies, or to give the needful time to prayer and devotional exercises. Feeling that, if he would impart to others, he himself must be perpetually drawing fresh supplies from the Foun-

¹ Gibbon, i. 6.

tain Head, Origen resolved on taking his friend and pupil Heracles (brother to the martyred Plutarch) as his assistant ; and accordingly he committed to the care of Heracles the younger catechumens, taking upon himself their instruction as they advanced deeper in the mysteries of the faith. It would appear that Origen had now returned to his former habit of instructing his disciples also in philosophy and science, warning them that all knowledge, if rightly applied, would assist them in their search after a better and higher wisdom. Eusebius says that he considered literature "as no small advantage in understanding the Holy Scriptures : whence also he considered the study of political and philosophical matters particularly necessary for himself."¹

The assistance of Heracles enabled Origen to devote much more time to a critical study of the Scriptures, in furtherance of which he made the laborious effort of learning the Hebrew language, collecting and collating all the versions of the Holy Scriptures which had hitherto existed. These consisted—1st, of a version by one Aquila, a proselyte Jew, who lived in the time of Hadrian ; 2ndly, the Septuagint ; 3rdly, that of Symmachus, an Ebionite, who probably made his translation in the time of Marcus Aurelius ; 4thly, the version of Theodotion, made during

¹ Euseb. vi. 18.

Commodus' reign ; and two more versions, one discovered at Jericho, the other at Nicopolis, in Actium. After years of indefatigable study, the result appeared in a work called the Hexapla, which consisted of all these versions, collated and arranged in parallel columns, with the Hebrew text. Different editions of the same work bore the name of the Octapla and the Tetrapla. The value of this work, for the better understanding of Holy Scripture, was inestimable ; and all, even his most determined enemies, have united in owning that the Church derived from Origen a lasting benefit therein. S. Jerome himself has said that he could be content to bear all the load of envy cast upon Origen's name, if he could also have his skill and knowledge of the Scriptures.¹

Meanwhile, all ranks and classes of men flocked more and more to hear the famous Christian teacher ; even eminent heathen philosophers not hesitating to own that they learned much in their own department from him. "Words cannot describe," writes Vincent of Lerins, "how every one loved, esteemed, and admired him. All those who aimed at holy things hastened from all points to see him. All Christians respected him as a prophet, all philosophers owned him as their master. His fame reached even to the imperial palaces." Among

¹ Praef. in Quæst. in Gen. Quoted by Cave.

those to whom Origen's instructions proved most valuable, was Ambrose, an Alexandrian of high birth and great wealth. He was led to know the truth by Origen, "and as if illuminated by a light beaming on his mind, became attached to the sound doctrine of the Church."¹

From this time a warm and active friendship existed between Ambrose and Origen, who were inspired with a kindred zeal for religion and Biblical researches. All the time that they spent together was devoted to such objects; as they walked together, or sat at meals, their talk turned on religious matters; their sleep was diminished, in order that great part of the night might be devoted to secret studies, and every occupation was consecrated with prayer.

Whilst thus happily and usefully employed, a new tribute to the fame of Origen was offered. Gellius, governor of Arabia, sent one of his officers with letters both to the Bishop Demetrius and to the Præfect of Egypt, desiring that the celebrated Origen, of whom he had heard so much, might speedily be sent to him, and instruct him in the Christian faith. Origen undertook the mission, but with what results we do not learn from the ancient historians.²

¹ Euseb. vi. 18.

² Mosheim supposes Origen's mission to have been to a tribe of wandering Arabs.—Eccles. Hist. Bk. i. 1.

CHAPTER II.

" God strikes His Church, but 'tis to this intent,
To make, not marre her, by this punishment;
So when He gives thee bitter pills, be sure,
'Tis not to poysen, but to make thee pure."

Herrick's Noble Numbers.

CARACALLA COMES TO ALEXANDRIA—ORIGEN RETIRES TO CÆSAREA—IS RECALLED BY THE BISHOP DEMETRIUS—ELAGABALUS—ALEXANDER SEVERUS—MAMMEA—SHE SENDS FOR ORIGEN—HIS COMMENTARIES—ALLEGORICAL EXPOSITION—HE IS ORDAINED PRIEST AT CÆSAREA—DISPLEASURE OF DEMETRIUS—ORIGEN COMBATS VARIOUS HERESIES—HE IS CONDEMNED BY A SYNOD—DEFENDED BY THE PRELATES OF PALESTINE—BANISHED FROM ALEXANDRIA—SETTLES AT CÆSARRA—HIS SCHOOL—DEATH OF BISHOP DEMETRIUS.

SOME time after Origen had returned to Alexandria, and quietly resumed his usual course of life, the city was menaced with the approach of the Emperor Caracalla, whose presence was always a death-warrant to numbers of his subjects. Accordingly Origen resolved on leaving Alexandria, and retiring into Palestine, he established himself at Cæsarea. Here he met with a warm reception from the Bishop Theoctistus, as also from all the other neighbouring prelates, who even invited him

to expound the Scriptures to the people in their presence. But when this came to the ears of Demetrius he saw reason to be dissatisfied, and required Origen to return to Alexandria, which he accordingly did, proving himself not less great in his readiness to obey lawful authority, than in his fitness to teach and command. This probably occurred about the year 216; a twelvemonth before the life of the monster Caracalla was terminated by the hand of an assassin, the tool of Marinus, one of the Praetorian prefects, who after a brief assumption of sovereignty was defeated by an eastern army, and Elagabalus, the first Asiatic Emperor for a short time degraded the Roman purple with his superstition and effeminacy.

The Christians underwent no persecution at the hands of Elagabalus, who was absorbed in the performance of his own vile and contemptible religious rites, offered to the sun, he himself bearing his name, (derived from two Syriac words, Ela a god, and Gabal, to form,) in right of his pontificate. Whilst his unparalleled profligacy revolted even the degenerate Romans, still less could they stand by and witness unmoved the insults he offered to their gods,—when the Palladium, that sacred image of Minerva, hitherto shrouded in revered mystery,—was publicly brought forth as the bride of the Asiatic idol, and then scornfully rejected for the Syriac goddess Astarte. The impotence of the offended deities who could not revenge themselves would

naturally weaken their influence, and men would involuntarily turn a more favourable glance to that pure faith so totally opposed in every possible way to the disgusting rites of Elagabalus. In the year 222 the unworthy Syrian monarch was murdered by the Praetorian guards, and his throne was filled by his cousin, Alexander Severus. Mammæa, Severus's mother, was not only a woman of powerful mind and judgment, but also distinguished for her piety and religion.¹ Most of the ecclesiastical historians agree in believing her to be a Christian,² and although the blessing of the Founder of that Faith is especially promised to the humble and lowly of heart, still we are unfortunately too familiar with the union of professed Christianity and the most extensively grasping ambition, to found a contrary supposition upon the strength with which that passion displayed itself in Mammæa. By some it has been supposed that Origen converted the royal matron; for being at Antioch with the emperor, Mammæa sent a guard of honour to Alexandria to request the celebrated catechist to visit her, and give her the benefit of his instructions in sacred things. Origen complied with the request, and accompanied the escort to Antioch, where he remained some time, teaching and interpreting, but in all things seeking not his own glory but

¹ Euseb. vi. 21.

² Tillemont. Hist. des Empereurs. Vol. iii. 185.

the Glory of God ; and the visit ended, he returned quietly to Alexandria, and resumed his usual occupations. To these was now added the laborious undertaking of writing commentaries on a considerable portion of the Holy Scriptures, a work which suited well with Origen's own critical inclinations, besides which he had the additional stimulus afforded by his friend Ambrose, who was exceedingly keen in the matter, and not only forwarded Origen's labours by his entreaties, but substantially, by furnishing the necessary pecuniary means for the support of seven secretaries, who took it by turn to write from his dictation, while as many copyists were retained to make fair copies of these notes, which were written in short hand. It is probable that the hearty zeal of Ambrose in this cause, led him personally to share his friend's labours. The industry with which their labours were prosecuted is sufficiently evidenced by their produce. Portions of his commentaries on the sacred books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Joshua, First of Samuel, Psalms, Canticles, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, S. Matthew, S. John, the Acts, Epistle to the Romans, and Hebrews, are still extant in the original Greek ; fragments in Latin translations remain from Numbers, Judges, Kings, Job, Isaiah, and S. Luke.¹ The tone of Origen's commentaries is entirely allegorical ; out of

¹ Clarke's Suc. Sacred Lit.

every fact, he deduces some spiritual meaning often most ingenious and beautiful, but of course admitting a system which must be liable to abuse. Thus in treating of the birth of Moses, and the condition of his countrymen at that time, Origen finds a series of hidden meanings. King Pharaoh is the devil, the male and female offspring of the Israelites are the rational and animal faculties of the soul, the devil as the enemy of man wishing to destroy the former, by which the soul may be led to seek heavenly things, and to preserve the more hurtful propensities alive in man.

Pursuing the same strain, Origen sees in Pharaoh's daughter the Church, who leaves the home of her heathen father, and comes to bathe in the river, that is the Baptismal font. Her discovery of Moses he explains as the Church finding the law ; the ark daubed with pitch and bitumen, being the deformities and obscurities added by the Jews, by which its beauty had been concealed ; and thus it necessarily continued till the Church, formed out of, and coming from among the Gentiles, receives Moses, the law, as her own child, which being given into the care of those who are spiritual, they strip it of its carnal glosses, and give it its proper spiritual interpretation. Then it acquires strength and excellence ; and thus Moses grows up, and becomes, through the means of the Christian Church, more respectable even in the sight of the Jews, according to the saying of Moses,—“I will move them to jealousy with

those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." (Deut. xxxi. 21.)¹ Nor were these commentaries the only production of Origen's active mind; Epiphanius says that he wrote six thousand volumes.² It is well, however, to remember, that in those times an individual homily or epistle was frequently called a book, which makes it not impossible that the affirmation might be true: a supposition which we could not possibly entertain on any other ground. Very many of his writings, which are named by authors nearer his own time, are now lost. Of some we shall again have occasion to speak.

In the year 228, however, a new interruption broke in upon the life of study and retirement in which Origen delighted. Strife and heresies were rife in Achaia, and the Catholic party summoned Origen to come and lend the aid of his well-known abilities and patient meekness, to restore peace and unity. It seems probable that his friend Ambrose was the instigator of this request.³ Accordingly, being furnished with an

¹ This specimen of Origen's style of comment on the Holy Scriptures is borrowed from Dr. Clarke's Chronological Succession of Ecclesiastical Literature.

² "Origen knew the Scriptures by heart, and in the study of explaining them he toiled night and day; a thousand homilies, and more, has he uttered in the Church, besides publishing innumerable commentaries."—S. Jerom. epist. 65, ad Pammach. ³ Tillemont. Vie d'Orig. Ar. xv.

ecclesiastical letter from Demetrius, his Bishop, Origen departed ; going through Palestine, and stopping at Cæsarea, where he had already met with so much respect and kindness. Nor had time and absence lessened the kindly feelings entertained for the eminent Alexandrian by the prelates of Palestine. They saw fit to mark their esteem for him yet more decidedly, by ordaining him Priest ; thereby giving him far greater authority in his peace-making embassy than as a layman he could possess.

The Bishops who thus signally showed the high estimation in which they held Origen, were Theoctistus, Bishop of Cæsarea, and Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem. The latter, as we have already seen, was an old friend and fellow disciple of Origen, to whom he writes, “ For this thou knowest was the Divine Will, that the friendship which has existed between us from our ancestors should remain unshaken, rather that it should grow warmer and firmer.”¹ In the same epistle, Alexander calls Origen his “ lord and brother surpassing all.”

But the event of his ordination called forth a beginning of troubles and persecutions which continued to harass Origen during the remainder of his life, and to be a fruitful source of contention after his death. Whether there was really any breach of ecclesiastical order in the two

¹ Euseb. vi. 14.

Bishops thus ordaining a man not under their jurisdiction, does not seem clear, but it does not appear that there was any canonical law against so doing;¹ neither did any of his contemporary opponents allege this as a ground of complaint: not even Demetrius himself, whose indignation carried him beyond the bounds of moderation in expressing his displeasure, attacking both Origen and the Bishops of Jerusalem and Cæsarea with great violence. Most ecclesiastical historians follow Eusebius in attributing this otherwise unaccountable burst of wrath to an unworthy jealousy of Origen, whose fame, in matters concerning the Church and her doctrines, eclipsed that of his diocesan. Alexander took up the defence of his friend warmly, and he wrote a public epistle to Demetrius, showing that that Bishop had himself, at the very time of Origen's ordination, borne witness to his worthiness of the priestly office, in the ecclesiastical letter with which he had furnished him.

Whilst waiting in Palestine, Origen was not idle in the cause of the Church. He contended earnestly with one Bassus, a heretic; and in the course of the argument quoted the apocryphal book of Susanna as an authority. A learned Christian, Julius Africanus, who was

¹ In the fourth century, the Church forbade a Bishop to ordain the *clerk* of another diocese, but no mention is there made of *laymen*.—See Tillemont, Hist. Eccles. Vol. iii. 527.

famous for his knowledge of Scripture, wrote in consequence to Origen, denying the authenticity of that history altogether. Origen wrote a full reply, which has been praised as a "model of that Christian charity with which the eminent sons of the Church should conduct any controversy which may arise among themselves on points of learning or discipline."¹ The great humility of his character is also shown in this reply; for Africanus, having expressed his surprise that so learned a man should make such a blunder, Origen answers that he does not esteem himself either sufficiently learned or penetrating to decide such matters, but that he would not presume to set up his judgment against the general opinion of the Church Catholic.

At Ephesus he seems to have fallen in with another opponent. "A heretic whom I met at Ephesus," he says, "never would enter into any conference with me, and even avoided opening his lips in my presence. But he composed a conference between us, wherein he wrote what he pleased and dispersed it amongst his followers, sending it to Rome, and doubtless to other places also. When I came to Antioch, he insulted me openly with this document, disseminating it so freely that some of our brethren obtained it. Accordingly at Antioch, before a large concourse of people, I asked him to account

¹ Tillemont.

for his imposture, which he impudently maintained. But I challenged him to produce his composition before all present, that all who knew my doctrine and that which I teach, might judge whether the writing were genuine or not. But he never dared to produce the document, so that every one was convinced of his treachery."¹ This interview probably took place on his return from Achaia, after which Origen resumed his school at Alexandria, and also his commentaries —for a time in comparative peace, which, however, proved only to be a lull before the storm. The Saviour, he said, held back the winds and the waves. But after a while the suppressed anger of Demetrius broke out. He summoned a synod, composed of Egyptian Bishops and Priests, who condemned not only Origen's ordination but his doctrines, and forbade him to teach any more in Alexandria, or even to inhabit the city. It is probable that the condemnation of his doctrines was founded upon certain of his writings which had been tampered with, and interpolated by his enemies, for Origen complains much of this injustice. But Demetrius was not satisfied with the results of this Synod; summoning a few Egyptian prelates, he constituted a second, and pronounced Origen to be deposed from the priesthood, and even, according to S. Jerome, to be excommunicate.

¹ Quoted by Tillemont. Ar. xvi.

This sentence Demetrius promulgated throughout the Church. Those Bishops who were acquainted with the real circumstances, the Prelates of Palestine, Arabia, Phoenicia, and Achaia, refused their assent, and defended Origen to the utmost of their power; but the more numerous body of the Church accepted the sentence of Demetrius, and confirmed his condemnation.¹ “What did Origen get as the reward of all his toil and labour?” asks S. Jerome. “He is condemned by the Bishop Demetrius, and excepting the Prelates of Palestine, Arabia, Phoenicia, and Achaia, he is condemned by consent of the whole world. Rome even summons her council against him, not that he taught any new dogmas, not that his doctrines were heretical, as those who howled at him like infuriated dogs would have us believe, but because they could not endure the brilliance of his eloquence and of his science, and because when he spoke, all besides seemed dumb.”²

It was in the year 231 that Origen was thus ungratefully banished from the city of which he has been the brightest ornament. The command of his catechetical school he made over to Heracles, who had for some time shared his

¹ On a similar occasion S. Augustine wrote: “They believed the letters of the council and they were right. Though the letters were false they did not wound their conscience, for the letters affirmed nothing against the Gospel, they only affirmed that of a man of which a man is capable.”

² Quoted by Tillemont.

CHAPTER III.

“Blest are they
Whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong
Than to do wrong, albeit themselves have erred.”
The Excursion.

PERSECUTION UNDER MAXIMIN—POLITICAL COMMOTIONS—
GORDIAN—BERYLLUS, BISHOP OF BOSTRA—PHILIP—
DECIUS—SEVERE PERSECUTION—GENERAL CONSTERNATION—
S. BABYLAS—ORIGEN A CONFESSOR—LIBERATED BY
THE DEATH OF DECIUS—ORIGEN DIES AT TYRE—REVIEW
OF HIS CHARACTER—HIS IMPUTED ERRORS—OPINIONS
CONCERNING HIM.

THE reign of Alexander Severus was favourable to the Christian religion. We have already seen that his mother Mammæa (to whose influence the Emperor was but too subject) was, if not a professed Christian, at all events favourable to the followers of the Crucified Saviour. Alexander himself paid great attention to the outward forms of religion, beginning each day with devotional exercises in a chapel, or temple annexed to the palace. His religion appears to have been a worship of whatever was great, or good, or exalted; for his temple was filled with the images of numerous heathen gods, and cele-

brated men, amongst whom, and together with Abraham, Orpheus, Apollonius of Tyana, and Alexander the Great, was enshrined the blessed Redeemer of the world. During the life of Alexander, therefore, the Christians gained both in strength and in esteem, but A.D. 235, the mild and gentle Alexander and his haughty mother, were both murdered by Maximin, a Thracian of ignoble birth, who had been a soldier under the command of Severus and Caracalla, and who now assumed the imperial purple, which, like Caracalla, he soon drenched in blood. Every one to whom he could attribute the slightest connection with the late Emperor, was regarded by this tyrant as deserving of death, and as the Christians had met with favour at the hands of Alexander, (many being found even amongst his household), they incurred the unrelenting hatred of the despot. It is supposed that Origen was one object of special persecution, but he was preserved by God's Mercy, and for some time found a refuge in the house of a Christian lady named Juliana.

Amongst those who underwent persecution at this time was Ambrose, the friend of Origen, who had for some time been in deacon's orders. His large possessions were pillaged, and he was separated from his wife and children, and together with Protoclitus, a priest of Cæsarea, was carried about from city to city in an ignominious and miserable captivity. Nothing daunted, however,

Ambrose bore all willingly for His Sake, Whom he had served faithfully for many years. Origen wrote to encourage the captives, and exhort them to persevere unto the end, especially Ambrose, who had so many ties to bind him to earth. But it pleased God to restore him, a noble confessor to his family, having proved his willingness to resign everything. Ambrose lived some time longer, and his friendship for Origen continued as long as his life. After a time, the general state of tumult and disturbance slackened the hand of persecution which oppressed the Christians. Maximin's throne was disputed by the two aristocratic Gordians, in 237, and after their brief reign (little more than a month), the senate raised Maximus and Balbinus to the chief sovereignty; Maximus marched against the tyrant, then besieging the town of Aquileia, and before any engagement took place Maximin fell by the hands of some of his own soldiers. His successor, Gordian (grandson to the Proconsul of that name, who for so short a time had worn the purple), gave good promise. During his reign of four years, the Church had no external warfare to contend against, and Origen appears to have remained engrossed as usual with his double duties of teaching and writing. One interruption, however, occurred. Beryllus, the Bishop of Bostra, in Arabia, began to propagate heretical doctrines concerning the Divinity of the Saviour, asserting that He had no existence

before the Incarnation, and also that he had no personal Divinity, but only a Divinity derived from the Father. The Arabian Bishops, having vainly endeavoured to convince Beryllus of his errors, sent to Origen, as more able than themselves to confute the heresy, and reclaim their erring brother. Nor were their hopes too sanguine. Origen listened patiently to all that his opponent had to say, and then replying to him with a superiority of wisdom and intellect, only equalled by his forbearance and charity, he effectually proved to Beryllus the weakness of his heretical propositions, and restored him to the Church. It is to be feared that controversy rarely has so happy a result as in this case. Beryllus became a sincere friend of Origen's, and a correspondence began between them, in the course of which he expressed earnestly his gratitude for the important service Origen had rendered him.

In the year 244, a new murder placed another Emperor on the throne ; Philip the Arabian having won the favour of the army, who assassinating their young warlike prince, made the son of a robber their sovereign. It has been asserted by some that Philip claims the honour of being the first Christian Emperor;¹ but there is little reason to believe the assertion, nor is it very desirable for the credit of the faith, to prove him

¹ Euseb. vi. 34.

to have professed Christianity, inasmuch as he continued to pay exceeding reverence to all the heathen rites of Rome. Undoubtedly Philip did not molest the Christians, and apparently received without displeasure an epistle from Origen, who also addressed the Empress Severa. It is not known what was the occasion in either case, but these facts probably served to strengthen the report that Philip himself was a Christian. It was during his reign that a pernicious heresy sprung up in Arabia, teaching that the soul perished with the body at the hour of death, and that together they would assume a new life at the Resurrection. A synod was called to put down this heresy, in which the learning and judgment of Origen were again victorious, and the newly-born heresy was rooted out. To this period also must be referred one of his most important writings, the refutation of an elaborate attack upon Christianity, made by Celsus,¹ an Epicurean

¹ "Of all the objectors to Christianity, Celsus is the most crafty and subtle. He wrote with the most refined fallacy that sophistry could invent, with an air of positiveness to impose upon the vulgar, and all the advantages that wit and fine raillery could give; he was also master of all the difficulties that an extensive knowledge, seconded by artifice and management, could object. On the other side, Origen, with all the force and solidity of right reason, reduces every argument to its true principles, follows his adversary step by step, convicts him of falsehood in point of fact, sets in the true light things which his adversary disguised or smothered, and establishes the truth of the

philosopher of no mean talents, all of which he brought to bear against the true faith. Origen's reply was not less able than the many other combats he undertook in behalf of the Church. Meanwhile one of the most grievous times of Christian persecution was drawing nigh.

Philip's reign lasted but four years. Murder and usurpation had become the habitual stepping-stones to the throne. All the natural ties of loyalty and allegiance had been severed till they were no longer felt ; and every soldier, as he looked at his Emperor, once in his own position, must have felt that, had he equal power, he had an equal right to reign. Decius, was almost forced by the army to accept the sovereignty. He hesitated ; but having once consented, there was no alternative but a battle, in which Philip fell, and Decius became Emperor, A.D. 249. Short as was his reign, it is marked to the ecclesiastical historian as a period of the most unrelenting and bitter persecution ever endured by the Christians. Decius was in every way an uncompromising enemy of the Church ; and the favour which she and her children had met with at the hands of his predecessor, Philip, was yet a further stimulant to his fury. Further accounts of this persecution will be found in the lives of S. Cyprian, S. Gregory,

Christian doctrine by the evidence of facts, and of its history."—Butler in S. Leon. April 22.

and S. Dionysius. It began almost directly upon the elevation of Decius, and the consternation spread over the Christian world was great. No one felt secure ; any person was at all moments liable to be accused or betrayed by those on whom he depended most ; and, once convicted of the crime of Christianity, no tortures were too horrible to be inflicted. The great aim of the persecutors was so to prolong and diversify the agonies which the martyrs endured, that at last, worn out with suffering, they might fall, and deny Christ. So many fled, that the deserts became peopled ; and yet soon the prisons overflowed to such an extent, that the public buildings were appropriated by the magistrates to receive their captives. Neither sex nor age availed as a defence ; old men, women, and children met with the same fate. S. Babylas, Bishop of Antioch,¹ perished in his dungeon, having

² S. Babylas was raised to the See of Antioch A.D. 239, and ruled it most admirably until the Decian persecution, when he incurred the Emperor's personal displeasure, by refusing him admittance into his Church during the celebration of public worship. Shortly after this event, S. Babylas was beheaded, together with three young men, brothers, named Urbanus, Prilidianus, and Epolonius, who were his spiritual children. S. Babylas requested that they might be executed first, lest they should be appalled at beholding his death ; and as he saw them fall, he exclaimed, "Behold, I and the children which the Lord hath given me !" He further requested his friends that he might be buried in his chains, as trophies of victory over sin and Satan.

witnessed a good confession ; and S. Alexander of Jerusalem, Origen's faithful and well-tried friend, received his crown of martyrdom. Origen himself was taken, and cast into an underground dungeon, an iron collar about his neck, and heavy chains weighing down his limbs. Here he underwent the torture of the rack, and other torments, being constantly threatened with the flames. But the same spirit which, when a boy, had made him not afraid to die, had grown up in him ; and he felt himself no less under God's loving care and protection in his loathsome prison, than when he had been the honoured guest of royal palaces. He knew that his hope and confidence were fixed where alone they could never be disappointed ; and, strong in the faith, he bore all that his enemies could inflict without faltering. Probably when he heard of the deliverance, one after another, of his friends from their bonds, and their entrance into their heavenly rest, his heart must sometimes have yearned for the silver cord of his own existence likewise to be loosed, that his spirit might return to God Who gave it. But

In the reign of Julian the Apostate, a heathen oracle at Daphne in Antioch, was rendered speechless until the bones of this martyr were removed, which was done at the Emperor's command ; the Christians making the removal a festival, singing psalms beside the coffin as they bore it, and repeating, " Confounded be all they that worship carved images."—S. Chrys. Hom. de S. Babyl.

in His All-seeing Mercy, God often appoints to His children a very different lot from that they would have sought for themselves ; and thus he who had coveted the martyr's crown so early, several times saw it within his reach, without being permitted, as it were, to stretch out his hand to take it.

Some time before, Origen had spoken in words very applicable now to himself. "Perhaps He Who sees all things, knows that we are not able to suffer martyrdom. Nevertheless, the Lord knoweth those that are His ; He has treasures where we should not think it ; for God seeth not as man seeth. For my part, I doubt not that many here are known to Him only, who in His sight are already martyrs, by the testimony to the faith their heart gives, ready to shed their blood for the Name of the Lord Jesus so soon as it shall be asked of them. I doubt not many here present bear His cross, and follow Him."¹ The persecutors were reserving Origen for execution, when the death of Decius (A.D. 251), two years after his accession, arrested the persecution, and Origen was set at liberty.

We can trace little more concerning him. He was now an old man, and much shattered by all the exertions and sufferings he had endured ; and probably he was no longer equal to any very active efforts for the cause he loved, but he con-

¹ Tenth Hom. in Num.

tinued to write epistles, "full of benefit to those needing consolation,"¹ to the last. It was at Tyre, in the year 254, that Origen entered into the rest he so ardently desired, being then in his seventieth year. His tomb was pointed out, in a church in Tyre, as one of the leading objects of interest in that city, for many years after his death.

Such are the records which have reached us of the life and actions of a man who has excited discussion and controversy from his own day until the present time; defended by saints and martyrs, and by saints and martyrs condemned: a fact which at least calls upon us to pause, before we unhesitatingly receive and adopt all he has taught.

To his many noble and saint-like qualities none can be blind. His early enthusiasm in the cause of religion remained unaltered; suffering no diminution from persecution, torture, or the increase of years, which removes the first ardour of many powerful emotions. Of his charity, meekness, and gentleness, we have abundant proofs; nor less so of his exceeding humility. Caressed by the great, even by royalty itself,—receiving signal marks of honour alike from the Christian Bishop and the heathen philosopher, and that at an age when vanity and ambition are peculiarly alive,—we find him persevering in

¹ Euseb. vi. 69.

the duties of the station to which God had called him ; never aspiring to rise above it,—never, in short, coveting any forbidden fortune, except when in his boyhood he would fain have snatched the martyr's crown. Humility has rarely been a feature amongst heretics and schismatics, either in past or present times.¹ “A man so thoroughly Catholic in all the qualities of his mind as Origen,” says a Church historian, “may hold some false, and therefore heretical opinions, for he is but man ; but he cannot be a heretic, for he is neither arrogant nor obstinate in his errors.”²

“There is none good but One.” All men are liable to fall into error, nor is it wise or well to refuse to see the truth, whilst, as S. Jerome says in writing concerning Origen, “Let us not imitate his faults, whose virtues we cannot reach.” God permitted this celebrated man to be one of His chosen instruments in leading many from darkness to light, and He has said, that “he which converteth the sinner from the error of

¹ Origen's humility has been contrasted with the pride of Tertullian. One surely cannot but be struck with the important fact, that the one died in communion with the Church, whilst of the other there is every reason to fear that he was, up to the time of his death, still a voluntary outcast from her sacred pale.

“Humble we must be, if to heaven we go ;
High is the roof there, but the gate is low.”

Herrick.

² Tillemont.

his ways, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."¹ Whilst therefore he gave to Origen great works to do for the good of the Church, He has also made him a warning to us, not to be led away by a speculative, over curious spirit, to pry too deeply into mysteries hidden from our sight. A penetrating, imaginative mind, doubtless led Origen to indulge in the investigation of matters too deep for him, and so to open the door to condemnation of himself, and detriment to the cause which above all others he loved to advance.

The doctrinal errors of which Origen has been accused, have been summed up as follows :

1st. That he maintained an inequality in the hypostases of the Holy Trinity. To this it is answered, that in contending against the Sabellian heresy, which confounded the number and difference of the Three Holy Persons, Origen attempted to express himself more definitely than seems consistent with the orthodox doctrine on this head ; but an effectual proof of the injustice of calling him the originator of the Arian heresy (as has been done) is, that S. Athanasius not only never accuses him of holding doubtful doctrine concerning the Holy Trinity, but expressly quotes him as an authority in this very matter.

2nd. That the souls of men do pre-exist.

¹ S. James v. 20.

3rd. That through their fault and negligence, they appear here, inhabitants of the earth, clothed with terrestrial bodies.

4th. That in the Resurrection we shall be clothed with heavenly or ethereal bodies.

5th. That after long time the damned shall be delivered from their torments, and try their fortunes in such regions of the world as their nature fits them for.

6th. That the earth after conflagration, shall become habitable again, and be the mansion of men and other animals, and this in eternal vicissitudes.¹

To these charges it must first be replied that there is no doubt very much has been promulgated under Origen's name, which he not only did not teach, but would have rejected with as much indignation as he did the sayings imputed to him by the Ephesian heretic, before mentioned. If this false interpolation and imputation took place in the author's lifetime, how much more easily after his death! Many of the Fathers assure us, that this was the case with Origen's writings. Vincentius Lirinensis says: "The books passing abroad under his name, are a great temptation, being read as his, so that although Origen gave no cause of originating erroneous

¹ Letter of Resolution concerning Origen and the chief of his Opinions, A.D. 1661. In this letter will also be found an elaborate answer to each of these charges.

doctrine, yet his authority should seem to have been the occasion, why the error hath been received.”¹ A learned Bishop of the middle ages writes : “ For my part, I affirm of Origen, that either he never wrote these things, but that they were wickedly forged by heretics, and fathered upon his name, or if he did write them, he wrote them not as his own judgment, but as the opinions of others.”²

Again, it was extremely probable that one of so subtle and refined a mind, delighting in allegorical and remote mysticism should be liable to broach notions, which being quite misunderstood and perverted by dissimilar minds, might be made to bear a very different meaning to that they were originally intended to convey. “ To heads unused to such theories, they would first appear very strange, and then false, because we are very unwilling that anything should be true, which we have never heard of before, and which we do not now understand.”³

Again still further, Origen himself expressly states, that many things which he propounded, were not offered as matters of dogmatic assertion, but as suggestions open to discussion ; many times not intended to go beyond the friends with whom he communicated freely on

¹ Adv. Heres. xvii.

² Bp. Haymo, of Halberstadt, quoted by Cave.

³ Letter of Resolution, p. 11.

these subjects. He reproaches Ambrose with having published abroad such matters which were not intended for any but his private consideration. Were all the doubts and difficulties that have presented themselves to earnest and thoughtful men, and those the most Catholic among us, to be published as their avowed opinions, who could escape the charge of heterodoxy?

At no time has Origen wanted hearty and sincere defenders, from his own time to the present, numbering amongst these Eusebius, S. Pamphilus (who defended him upon the strong ground of his own writings), Rufinus, and at one time S. Jerome, who afterwards became his bitter enemy. S. Jerome owns that one source of his great aversion for Origen, was the extravagant admiration bestowed on him by many, proving Origen's own words: "There are many, who esteeming me more than I merit, speak too highly of my teaching and of my doctrine, and who say and publish things that I behold not in myself; whilst others deprecate what I say, and attribute to me sentiments which I never held. Both overstep the boundary of justice, and all injure the truth, the one party by too much hatred, the other by an overweening love."¹ S. Hilary, S. Ambrose, S. Basil, and S. Gregory Nazianzen, have all made honourable mention of

¹ In S. Luke xxv. quoted by Tillemont.

Origen, though not justifying his real or imputed errors.

"All true Catholics," writes Vincentius Liricensis, "should know that they ought to receive teachers with the Church, not desert the faith of the Church with their teachers."¹ And with this spirit we may safely glean all the great good to be derived from Origen, without binding ourselves blindly to support all that bears his name. We are Catholics, not Origenists. Let us strive to imitate his many virtues, and his unfailing desire in all things to serve his and our Master, in humble hope that when the day of judgment comes, and those "that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and contempt," He Who judgeth not as man judgeth, may have mercy upon us, and upon all those who have heartily striven to do what they could, and serve Him faithfully, remembering the promise, that such as be "wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."²

¹ Adv. Heres. xvii.

² Dan. xii. 2, 3.

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